

King, Crown Prince offer condolences to Sharjah governor

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Abdullah and HRH Crown Prince Hamzah on Sunday sent two cables of condolences to the governor of Sharjah, Sheikh Sultan Qasbi, on the passing away of his son, Mohammad Sultan Qasbi.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
جوردان تايمز يومية سياسية مستقلة تصدر عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية، الرأي.

Israeli soldier kills comrade, commits suicide

TEL AVIV (AFP) — An Israeli army soldier shot a fellow soldier and then committed suicide after a dispute at an army post on the Israeli-Lebanese border, Israeli radio said. An army statement confirmed the deaths but refrained from giving details about the incident. "Two army soldiers, Sergeant Ronen Kimchi, 20, and Private Alexander Reznikov, 19, were killed and an officer was lightly wounded in the north of Israel," the statement said. "From the initial investigation it appears that a dispute arose between the two soldiers ... and one soldier fired from his weapon. Both soldiers died from their wounds," it added. Reznikov was a driver and Kimchi was a nurse. Radio Israel said they had argued over guard duty.

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King, Arafat discuss issue of Palestinian statehood

'PNA president may postpone declaration until December'

By Saad G. Hattar

AMMAN — His Majesty King Abdullah held talks on Sunday with Palestinian President Yasser Arafat on the prospective declaration of a Palestinian state, a month before the scheduled deadline. Meanwhile, authoritative sources told the Jordan Times that Arafat, under international pressure, may consider shifting the scheduled timing to "December 1999."

The Palestinian policy-making circles will convene on the eve of May 4, to discuss and announce the new deadline in December, said the sources on condition of anonymity.

King Abdullah and Arafat held a closed-door meeting followed by broader talks with high-ranking officials from both sides, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

In a joint communiqué following the talks, both parties "reiterated their commitment to peace as a strategic goal in the Middle East."

They also hailed U.S. President Bill Clinton's "intensive efforts" aimed at steering the stalled process back on track.

Jordan and the PNA called for "resuming peace negotiations on all tracks from the

point they stopped at" between Israel and Arab states.

The PNA-Israel negotiations have hit an impasse while the Syrian and Lebanese tracks have been on hold since February 1996.

King Abdullah and Arafat called on Israel to honour peace accords with the Palestinian National Authority and demanded "an immediate halt to settlement activities, land grabs and the imposition of a de facto status with regard to Jerusalem."

Israel has been engaged in a "unilateral" drive to Judaize Arab east Jerusalem, part of Jordan along with the West Bank between 1950 and 1967.

The Jewish state claims "united" Jerusalem as its "eternal" capital, while the PNA wants to proclaim the Holy City as the capital of the future Palestinian state.

Arafat has repeatedly vowed to declare independence when the self-rule accords with Israel expire next month, despite opposition from Israel and the reservations of the U.S. and some European nations.

Arafat has been on a whirlwind tour of Arab and European capitals, drumming up support for a Palestinian statehood ahead of the May 4 expi-

ration of the interim Oslo peace accords with Israel.

He is due to leave on Monday on the Asian leg of his world tour, which will take him to Turkey, Russia, Japan and China.

During his talks in Amman, Arafat briefed King Abdullah on "Palestinian ideas to move forward the negotiations with Israel," Information Minister Nasser Lawzi said.

Lawzi added that the Palestinian leader "updated the King on the outcome of his latest talks in Cairo and Washington on Palestinian statehood."

King Abdullah reiterated Jordan's backing to "our Palestinian brethren" in their quest for an independent Palestinian state.

Prime Minister Abdur-Ra'uf S. Rawabdeh stressed on Saturday that Amman "believes that some form of unity will emerge between the Jordanian and Palestinian peoples when the latter establish an independent Palestinian state on their national soil with Jerusalem as its capital."

An official who attended the talks on Sunday said the Palestinians are contemplating setting a new date, in December, for their declaration of statehood.

The official noted that there will be a new round of Palestinian-U.S. talks in London before May 4, as an extension to the Arafat-Clinton summit on March 23 at the White House.

On Friday, the Palestinians gave the first hint that they might bow to international pressure and delay the declaration.

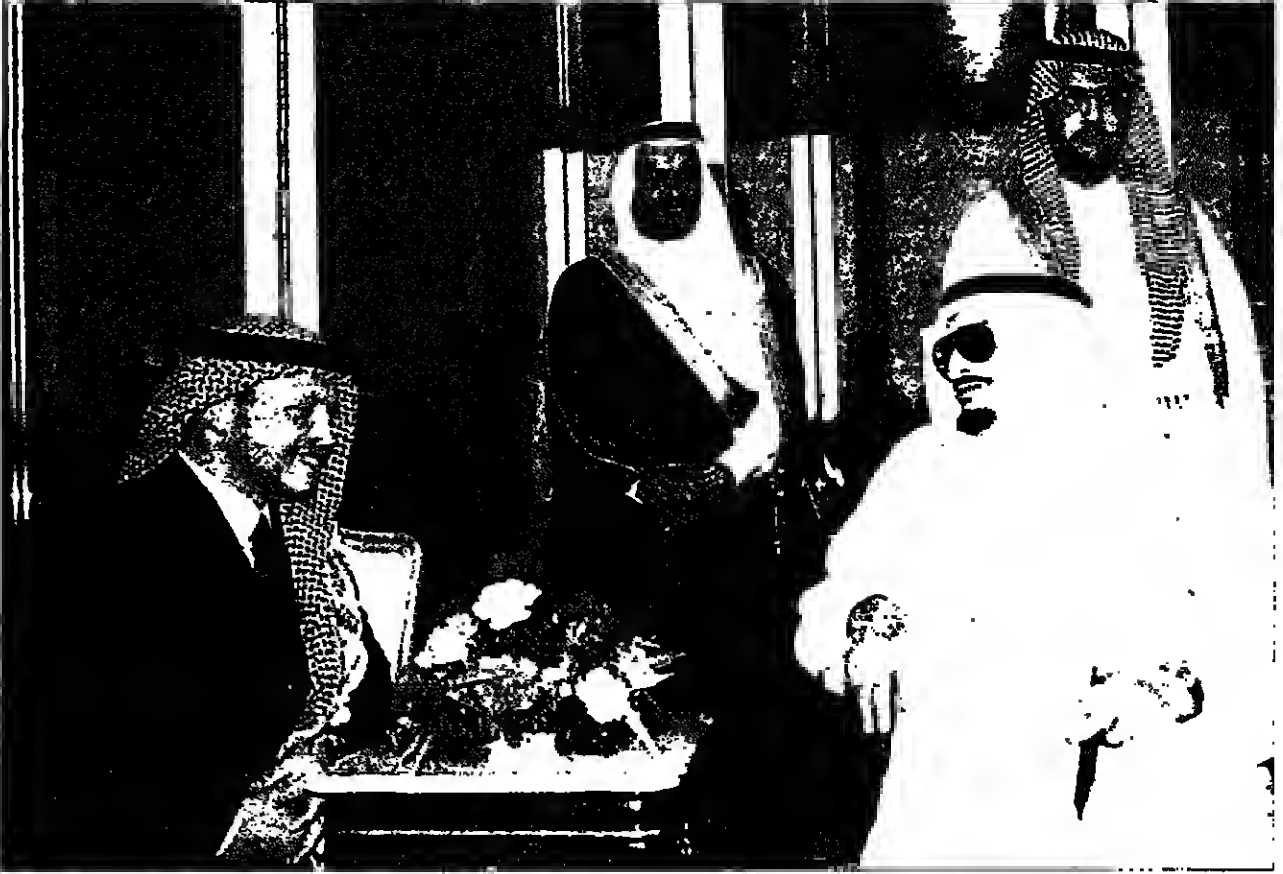
"The various Palestinian parties will convene before the end of April to decide whether to declare a Palestinian state [on May 4] or postpone the declaration for a limited time," Palestinian International Cooperation Minister Nabil Shaath told reporters in Cairo.

But Shaath, who attended Arafat's talks with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, warned that the delay would not last until the end of the year.

He stressed that Arafat has said previously that "a Palestinian state would be established before the end of the century."

Before ending his second visit to Jordan within one month, Arafat laid a wreath of flowers on the grave of King Hussein.

Alongside King Abdullah, Arafat read verses of the Holy Koran for the soul of the late King.



His Majesty King Abdullah meets on Sunday with Saudi King Fahd at the beginning of his three-day visit to Saudi Arabia (AFP photo)

King begins visit to Saudi Arabia

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Majesty King Abdullah on Sunday began a visit to Saudi Arabia, where he will hold talks with King Fahd, senior Saudi officials and royal family members.

Upon his arrival, King Abdullah, accompanied by a delegation, was welcomed by King Fahd and Saudi royal family members, including Crown Prince Abdullah Bin Abdul Aziz.

King Abdullah, who is expected to perform the lesser pilgrimage (Umra) in Mecca after the talks with the Saudi leaders, is accompanied by Prime Minister Abdur-Ra'uf S. Rawabdeh, Royal Court Chief Abdul Karim Kabari, Their Royal Highnesses Prince Ali Ben Hussein and Prince Talal Ben Mohammad, as well as the Senate president and House speaker, Foreign Minister Abdul Ilah Khatib.

General Intelligence Department Director Samih Bantkhi, and other officials.

The King and the Saudi monarch are expected to discuss bilateral relations, pan-Arab issues and questions of common concern to Jordan and Saudi Arabia.

King Abdullah, who is paying the three-day visit to Saudi Arabia at the invitation of King Fahd, is also expected to thank Saudi leaders for the political and economic support they have offered to Jordan, according to the Jordan News Agency, Petra.

King Abdullah told the Okaz Arabic daily that Jordanian-Saudi relations are strong and deep-rooted, saying that the objective of his visit to Saudi Arabia is to further enhance cooperation and coordination between the two countries and to express gratitude to Saudi leaders for their stand by Jordan at critical moments.

"I am here to express our gratitude for the Arab stand with Jordan at these delicate moments, particularly by King Fahd," said the King.

King Abdullah pointed to the positive role played by the Saudi kingdom in achieving peace and security as well as stability in the region, noting that the Saudi government pursues policies under the leadership of King Fahd to defend Arab and Muslim causes.

King Abdullah also met with Prince Sultan Ben Abdul Aziz, second deputy prime minister and minister of defence.

King Abdullah and Prince Sultan discussed bilateral ties.

In remarks to Petra about the King's visit, Foreign Minister Khatib said Jordan deeply appreciates the stand of the Saudi monarch and leadership for their support for Jordan, describing King Abdullah's first official visit to Saudi Arabia as extremely important.

Khatib said the Jordanian people will never forget Saudi Arabia's stand by Jordan during difficult circumstances facing the Kingdom.

Jordan's Ambassador to Saudi Arabia Hani Khalifa said King Abdullah's visit assumes a special importance and reflects Saudi Arabia's desire to maintain and strengthen the brotherly ties binding the two countries.

He said economic issues are among the main topics on the two leaders' agenda.

HRH Prince Faisal Ben Hussein was sworn in as Regent during the King's absence. A Royal Decree was issued on Sunday appointing Deputy Prime Minister Marwan Hmoud as acting prime minister during Rawabdeh's absence abroad.

Israel moves to close 'PNA offices' in Jerusalem

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — Israeli police took preliminary steps on Sunday to close three Arab east Jerusalem offices allegedly linked to the Palestinian National Authority (PNA), police said.

Police delivered warnings to the local bureau of the official Palestinian news agency, Wafa, the office of Palestinian President Yasser Arafat's advisor for Christian affairs, Ibrahim Qandalaft, and a centre run by a

prisoners' support group.

"We are giving the offices notice of the upcoming closure," Jerusalem police spokesman Samuel Ben-Ruby told AFP.

He said the orders give the offices 12 hours to express in writing their reservations to a closure.

Palestinian lawyers are preparing to appeal, human rights lawyers said.

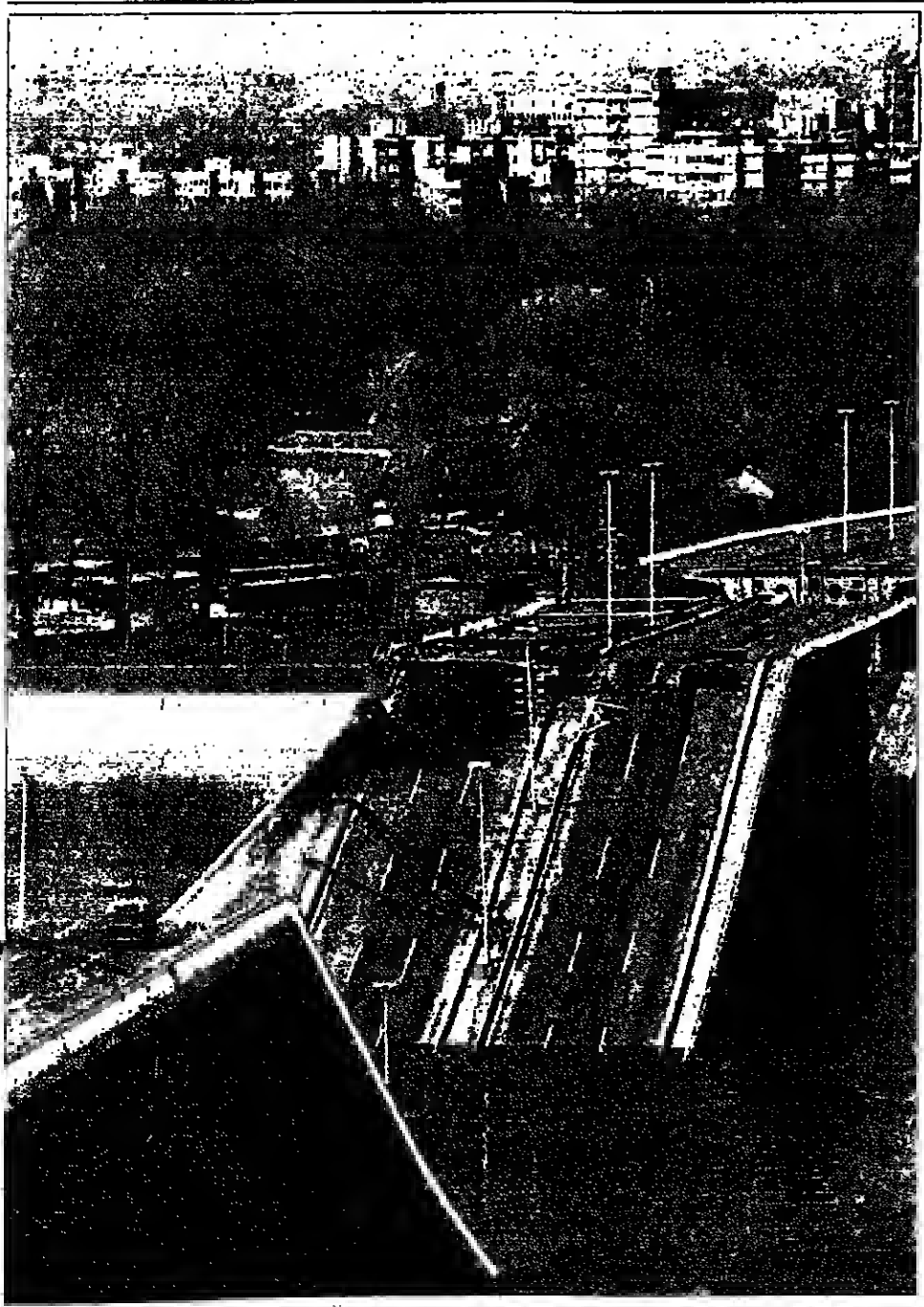
Israeli police acted on instructions from Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu who launched a new crackdown on Palestinian activities in occupied Jerusalem last Monday, ordering the closure of the three offices and barring two Palestinian officials from the city.

Israeli law prohibits any official Palestinian activity in Israel, including occupied east Jerusalem. The illegal annexation of east Jerusalem is not recognised, neither by the

Palestinians nor by the international community.

The order delivered to the offices reads: "It has been brought to the attention of the Minister of Internal Security Avigdor Kahalani that your office... is an official representation of the PNA and that it operates in Israel without the required permit."

The PNA says it does not have any office or representation in east Jerusalem.



The Sloboda (Freedom) Bridge connecting Novi Sad and Sremska Kamenica lies in ruins on Sunday after it was hit late Saturday during NATO air strikes over Yugoslavia (AFP photo)

NATO hits Belgrade targets, pledges to step up strikes

Agencies

NATO WARPLANES and missiles attacked an army headquarters, oil refineries and other targets in and around Belgrade on Sunday, while President Slobodan Milosevic's forces headed for Kosovo, where Albanian guerrillas are preparing a last stand in the province's western mountains.

Some of the refugees overwhelmed neighbouring regions were flown to European countries as relief agencies and Western nations struggled to help the more than 300,000 people forced out of Kosovo.

With mounting reports of mass killings and other atrocities in a campaign by Serb forces to rid Kosovo of ethnic Albanians, NATO officials again blamed poor weather for limiting the effectiveness of the air attacks.

But clearing skies over Belgrade and other parts of northern Serbia allowed attacks on the Yugoslav first army headquarters in the capital, along with petroleum tanks, an ammunition plant and highway bridges elsewhere.

Air Commodore David Wilby said at NATO headquarters in Brussels.

Wilby also said the Yugoslav military was shifting forces in Kosovo to the southwest, where the rebel Kosovo Liberation Army was regrouping for what appeared to be a last stand.

"This is the last area where the rebels will be able to mount a serious resistance," Wilby said of the mountainous region near the Albanian border.

Yugoslav media said at least three people, including an elderly woman, were killed and 21 injured in attacks Saturday night and Sunday.

The Tanjug state news agency said NATO attacks Sunday afternoon hit unspecified targets near Kllina, 45 kilometres west of Pristina, the provincial capital.

It also reported NATO missiles hit an oil refinery at Pancevo, northeast of Belgrade, killing two workers and injuring four, while a 73-year-old woman died and seven people were injured in an attack on Cacak, a southern industrial town 85 kilometres south of the capital.

Three people were injured when a fuel depot near the town of Kraljevo, some 120 kilometres south of Belgrade, was also hit, news reports said.

In the capital's New Belgrade area, across the Sava River from downtown, civil defence officials said a thermal heating plant was hit, along with the police academy in the Banjica suburb. Flames lit the

clear, moonlit night with a huge orange glow.

Those attacks came a few hours after NATO air strikes Saturday night destroyed the Freedom Bridge across the Danube River at Novi Sad, Serbia's second largest city, where another bridge was wrecked last week. Both were major arteries between the capital of Belgrade and Yugoslavia's northern agricultural and industrial region.

On Sunday, boats transported people across the Danube in Novi Sad, which now only has one bridge left over the river, south of the downtown.

(Continued on page 2)

EU readies itself to shelter Kosovo refugees

BONN (R) — European Union (EU) countries are considering offering sanctuary to over 100,000 refugees driven out of Kosovo by Yugoslav forces, the German government said on Sunday.

Germany, which currently holds the EU presidency, made the announcement as hundreds of thousands of ethnic Albanians from Kosovo streamed into neighbouring countries.

Foreign ministry spokesman Martin Erdmann said EU countries could take more than 100,000 of some 350,000 refugees who have fled to Albania and Macedonia since NATO started bombing Yugoslavia on March 24.

Western countries have expressed horror at the scale of Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic's expulsion of the Albanian population of Kosovo and have accused him of using the wave of refugees as a way of destabilising the Balkans.

Refugees are currently stranded in border areas around Kosovo in what the U.N.

High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has described as "desperate" conditions.

EU interior ministers are due to meet on Wednesday to coordinate a plan to provide sanctuary to the refugees.

"The European Union is considering taking refugees in the six-figures," Erdmann said, but he could not say when the transport of refugees would begin.

Earlier, NATO spokesman Jamie Shea gave a breakdown of how the refugees would be distributed between Western countries. Shea said Germany had agreed to take 40,000 refugees, Greece 5,000, Norway 6,000, Turkey 20,000, Canada 5,000 and the United States 20,000.

Some 80,000 refugees were driven out of the southern Serb province on Saturday alone, NATO said.

French President Jacques Chirac and German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder agreed in a phone call on Sunday to work for the safe return of refugees who have fled Kosovo, a spokesman for the French

president's office said.

Chirac also expressed support "for Germany's initiatives for a mobilisation and coordination of efforts" to help the refugees and countries taking them in, the spokesman said.

"The two leaders 'reaffirmed the objective for the return of the refugees, under good conditions, to their homes to thwart the strategy' of Milosevic."

Schroeder stressed on Saturday that Germany would shelter refugees only as a temporary measure and that the rest of the EU must bear a fair share of the burden.

Germany admitted around 350,000 refugees from earlier Yugoslav wars, especially in Bosnia, more than the rest of the EU put together.

In Rome, a government source noted that Italy was the only country with a massive refugee operation under way in Albania, and that was the main focus of Italian efforts at the moment.

Greece, concerned about a possible

spillover of Kosovo refugees into its own territory, said it was prepared to accept a few thousand but insisted the effort to shelter those displaced must be handled on a European or NATO level.

"Greece is open to sheltering some refugees but it has to be done as part of a coordinated plan," a foreign ministry official said.

UNHCR Chief Sadako Ogata said that Kosovo's neighbours no longer had the means to cope with the inflow. "All nations must now help to save lives," she said.

A spokesman for Prime Minister Tony Blair said Britain was ready to provide temporary accommodation for some of the Kosovo refugees but the top priority for Britain and the world was to enable the refugees to return home and rebuild their lives in a secure environment.

A Swedish foreign ministry official said Sweden was willing to take in refugees from Kosovo but must first discuss details with other EU countries.

Arab League chief expects Lockerbie handover soon

CAIRO (R) — Arab League Secretary General Esmat Abdul Meguid said on Sunday he expected Libya to hand over the two men accused of bringing down a Pan Am airliner over Lockerbie, Scotland, killing 270 people, by Tuesday as promised.

Asked when the transfer would take place, he told Reuters in an interview that all the indications pointed to this happening "in the next few days, the next 24 or 48 hours."

Abdul Meguid said he had sent Assistant Secretary General Ahmad Bin Hilli to Tripoli in response to a Libyan invitation to a seven-member League contact group, which has worked for years to resolve the Lockerbie dispute, to witness the handover.

Hilli flew from Cairo earlier on Sunday with Egypt's Administrative Development Minister Mohammad Zaki Abu Amer to the Tunisian island of Djerba, close to the Libyan border. They must travel overland to Tripoli

because of U.N. sanctions on Libya.

The Arab League has long sought a solution to the dispute between Libya and the West over the 1988 Lockerbie bombing, promoting the compromise now adopted where the two suspects will stand trial under Scottish law in a neutral country.

Abdul Meguid said Libya had shown flexibility in the search for a solution. "By handing over the two suspects to the jurisdiction of a Scottish court, I think Libya has shown goodwill to put an end to this and lift the sanctions," he said.

After a decade of fruitless actions, Britain and the United States in August dropped their insistence on a trial in either of their countries and agreed to a neutral, third country.

"The Arab League has taken this position from many years but we had a response coming from the United States and the United Kingdom only last August," Abdul Meguid said.

He also paid tribute to the diplomatic efforts of Egypt, Saudi Arabia and South Africa.

The Arab League chief said the Lockerbie row had caused much friction between the Arab World and the West. "We hope this will clear relations between the Arab World, particularly Libya, and the United States and the United Kingdom," he declared.

In the Netherlands, where the trial will take place at the former U.S. military base of Camp Zeist, Scottish officials made final preparations to take the two Libyans into custody.

Libya pledged last month to turn over the pair, Abdul Bassat Ali Mohammad Megrabi and Lameo Khalifa Fhimah, by April 6.

Once they are in the Netherlands, U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan, whose office has handled indirect negotiations between Libya and the United States and Britain, is to write a letter to the Security Council that would automatically suspend sanctions imposed on

Libya in 1992 and tightened in 1993. The council can vote to lift them 90 days later.

"This is a major breakthrough," said an Arab diplomat of the anticipated denouncement of the Lockerbie affair. "We are shifting from the context of sanctions towards a solution and the suspension and eventual lifting of sanctions."

"We are in a different, dynamic process. Of course we know it will take time and there will be pitfalls, but the page is turning from confrontation to a legal process."

He said it was vital to secure the formal lifting of sanctions 90 days after the handover, adding that it was impossible to "keep the sanctions sword hanging over Libya."

The diplomat, who asked not to be identified, said the Arabs now wanted a period of confidence-building between Libya and the West. "It's important there be no negative statements, especially from the United States," he said.



LAND DAY PROTEST: Masked Palestinians burn an Israeli flag during a demonstration in the West Bank city of Nablus on Sunday. The demonstration was held to commemorate Arab Land Day, held on March 30, in which Arab citizens of Israel protest against Israeli government's confiscation of Arab land (Reuters photo)

NATO hits Belgrade

(Continued from page 1)

British military spokesman Doug Henderson told reporters Sunday the NATO attacks were "cutting deep into the Serbian war machine."

The United States will send 24 Apache helicopters and 2,000 supporting soldiers to Albania to join the campaign against Serbian forces, a Pentagon spokesman said on Sunday.

"It's a logical expansion of the current air operation," spokesman Ken Bacon said at a Pentagon news briefing. "It gives us greater precision, all-weather capability, day or night, to go after the types of weapons that the Yugoslav army... is using to not only repress the Kosovo Albanian people but to drive them from their villages and to shell and crush the villages."

Vladimir Jovanovic, the Yugoslav ambassador to the United Nations, maintained Belgrade's defiant stance toward the NATO campaign. "It only increases our resolve in defending our country," he said on the "Fox News Sunday" U.S. television programme.

French Defence Minister Alain Richard said in an interview published on Sunday that there was no plan to intervene on the ground in Kosovo other than to implement a political accord.

Italian Foreign Minister Lamberto Dini said in an interview published on Sunday that the West should consider a total blockade of Serbia if air strikes did not achieve their aims.

"My reasoning stems from the recognition of the ineffectiveness of bombardments

compared with the goals NATO has laid out," Dini told Corriere Della Sera.

In his Easter address from the Vatican, Pope John Paul II called on Yugoslavia to open a "humanitarian corridor" for aid to Kosovo refugees but he also denounced the "ravaging fire of bombs" as part of a "diabolic spirit of revenge."

A Serb cabinet minister told U.S. television that the three U.S. soldiers captured by Serb forces last week will not be put on trial and would be freed when NATO bombing ends.

NATO spokesman Jamie Shea said the house of moderate Kosovo Albanian political leader Ibrahim Rugova in Pristina was occupied by Serb security forces and that he had no freedom of movement.

"We are going to try very hard to share the burden" in dealing with the refugee problem, U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright said on the U.S. television network NBC's "Meet The Press" programme.

While some refugees may be airlifted out of the region, she said "it's important for them not to be too far away from Kosovo so they can return."

NATO also agreed to use the nearly 12,000 NATO troops now deployed in Macedonia in any way to assist in the humanitarian effort. Those troops originally were deployed to implement an elusive Kosovo peace agreement between ethnic Albanians and the Yugoslav government.

The troops were building temporary refugee centres capable of sheltering 20,000 people and transporting food and water to border areas, NATO officials said Sunday.

Gulf Arab states mobilise to aid Kosovo refugees

DUBAI (AFP) — The wealthy Gulf states are mobilising to help the Kosovo refugees, by sending tonnes of humanitarian aid and launching a series of campaigns to raise funds.

A plane loaded with 38 tonnes of humanitarian aid from the United Arab Emirates, left for Tirana on Sunday and two others are due to leave later in the week, the Red Crescent society said.

"The plane is loaded with

food, blankets and tents," said Khalifa Nasser Saeidi, head of the society's council, adding that the aid had come from the government and private donations.

The Red Crescent oo Wednesday launched a campaign to collect funds and the initial response has been encouraging, Saeidi said, adding that one person had given half a million dirhams (\$136,000).

Saudi Arabia on Saturday night sent two planes to Tirana, loaded with 120

tonnes of tents, blankets, carpets and food, newspapers reported.

The Saudi-based League of the Islamic World on Wednesday also launched a campaign to collect funds for the refugees.

Kuwait also planned to send relief aid as the cabinet reiterated its support for refugees Sunday.

"The cabinet took note of an emiri order to send urgent relief supply to Muslim Kosovars who are presently exposed to

killing and forced displacement at the hands of Serb forces," Kuwait's official KUNA news agency said.

Qatar's charitable organisations have also launched campaigns to raise funds. A special committee set up in June last year to support Kosovo's Muslim population has been spearheading an awareness campaign in the local press.

In a statement published Sunday by the official QNA news agency, Qatar's Foreign Minister Sheikh

Hamad Ben Jasssem Al Thani said that while humanitarian aid was important, it was not enough.

He called on "Arab states and Muslims to take a unified and unequivocal position not only to provide humanitarian aid but also to resolve this crisis urgently."

He also expressed hope that a meeting of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference's (OIC) contact group on Kosovo, due

to be held in Geneva on Wednesday, would "adopt a position which supports the Kosovars."

The OIC's contact group includes Iran, Indonesia, Malaysia, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Egypt and Senegal.

The Gulf's newspapers have repeatedly condemned the "ethnic cleansing" by Yugoslav forces inside Kosovo and have urged NATO to send in ground forces to halt the repression.

Israeli Arabs discover Gaza

By Nidal Al-Mughrabi, Reuters

GAZA — The struggling Palestinian economy in the Gaza Strip is receiving a welcome boost from an eager group of Israeli tourists — Arab citizens of the Jewish state.

Some 2,000 Israeli Arabs flock to Gaza each month for day trips and shopping in its inexpensive markets or for longer stays in one of the 10 hotels in the self-ruled area.

"We thought that Gaza was destroyed, a city for ghosts," said Mawabeh Shehadeh, a school teacher from the Galilee town of Nazareth, referring to the long years of Israeli occupation before the Palestinian National Authority took over in 1994 under interim peace deals.

Shehadeh said some Israeli Arab visitors felt more at home in Palestinian Gaza than in Israel,

where the Arab minority makes up some 20 per cent of the population.

"As Palestinians we felt that our rights were taken away from us, we felt we had lost our identity," she said.

Gazans said such visits by Israeli Arabs — whom they call "Palestinians of the 1948 land," or pre-state Israel — brought Gaza's moribund tourism industry alive.

"Despite borders and restrictions we always felt they were our brothers," said Ahmad Al Sabea, 47, a taxi driver who ferried a group of Israeli Arab visitors around Gaza City.

Sabea said he earned 200 shekels (\$50) for the day, double his usual take.

Israeli restrictions

Palestinian officials praised the visits but complained of Israeli

restrictions on Palestinians wanting to leave Gaza, where Israel, citing security considerations, frequently closes the border.

"Israel is still preventing visits by our people in the West Bank and Jerusalem," said Nabil Sarraj, director of the tourism ministry in Gaza.

He called on Israel to open a "safe passage" between Gaza and the West Bank in accordance with a U.S.-brokered land-for-security deal signed last October and suspended by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu two months later after he accused Palestinians of violating the agreement.

"That will improve the economic situation in Palestinian areas and limit the suffering of the people," Sarraj said.

Sarraj said his ministry provided visitors who came to Gaza through registered offices with services that included tour

guides. "So far, we have visited the airport and the main police station," said Kheir Qaddah, an Israeli Arab on a shopping trip with his family in Gaza's main market. "We also received a warm welcome from the chief of police who briefed us on the situation. We still have to visit the parks and seaside."

Qaddah said it appeared as if "the whole city has been rebuilt — the buildings and all the streets look great."

Cheap prices

Some of the visitors called Gaza a bargain. "Prices are cheaper than in our village, so we bought for ourselves and also for our relatives back home," said 50-year-old Fatma Krenawi, from Rahat, a bedouin town in Israel's southern Negev desert. Shopowners said business

picked up sharply during the Jewish Sabbath when the Israeli Arabs came to town.

"Except for Saturdays you can say the market is dead," said Falaah Barghouth, 30, owner of a cosmetic store in Gaza's main shopping centre.

Hotel owners have sharply reduced rates for the visitors from Israel, who usually arrive in groups of about 50.

"Their visits strengthen the economy and support our businesses," said Salah Abu Hasira, who owns a restaurant on Gaza beach.

Laila Saed, a teacher from the Israeli Arab village of Ara, said she emerged strengthened from her trip to Gaza.

"In Israel, everything around us looks non-Arab, including the language. But here we felt we were home — we felt we were Palestinians," she said.

JORDAN TELEVISION

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PROGRAMME TWO
19:00 Le Journal
19:15 Extra Large
19:30 News headline
19:33 Les Inventiones de la Vie
20:00 Worldnet
20:30 Serie - Entre Terre et Mer
21:15 Filler & Encounter
22:00 News in English
22:30 FOX

PRAYER TIMES

03:56 Fajr
05:15 (Sunrise) Duha
11:38 Dhuhur
15:12 'Asr
18:01 Maghreb
19:20 'Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Sweidh. Tel. 5920740
Assemblies of God Church Tel.
4632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 4624590
Terra Sancta Church Tel. 4622366
Anglican Church Tel.
4624853/4624811.
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Amman International Church
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The Evangelical Local Church
in Amman Tel. 5811295
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter

Day Saints Tel. 4654932

St. John the Baptist at De la
Salle College Tel. 5661757
Church of the Ammudation Tel.
4637440
Greek Orthodox Church Tel.
4646138
Church of Presentation, Sweidh.
Tel. 5920146
The United Catholic Church
Tel. 4624757
The English-Language Catholic
Parish Tel. 4614190
Evangelical Free Church Tel.
4892679
The Baptist Church Tel.
4628052
The Armenian Catholic Church
4771331
The Armenian Orthodox
Church Tel. 4775261

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology

Temperatures are expected to rise further with clouds appearing at different altitudes and winds southeasterly moderate. In Aqaba, it will be warm, winds northerly moderate, and seas calm.
Min./Max. temp.
Amman 08/22
Aqaba 14/30
Deserts 06/24

Jordan Valley

Yesterday's high temperatures:
Amman 19 Aqaba 28 Humidity
readings: Amman 25 per cent.
Aqaba 23 per cent.

Following are the temperatures expected today in the following areas:
Ajloun 06/18
Jerash 09/25
Um Qays 08/24
Madaba 08/22
Petra 09/23
Dead Sea 14/29

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Walid Al Masri 5675485
Dr. Youssef Rashid 4875792
Dr. Jum'a Abu Dhiab 4758848
Dr. Khalil Jhali 4784450

AMMAN:
Firas Pharmacy 5661912
Al Salam Pharmacy 4636730
Mayadah Pharmacy 5537004
Ruka Al Dawa Pharmacy 5536169

IRBID:
Dr. Latif Al Shalabi (02)241789
Fou'ad Pharmacy (02)275360
ZARQA:
Dr. Walid
Balasch (05)982799

Palatine Pharmacy

(05)983562
EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 4637111
Civil Defence Department 5661111
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue 4630341
Civil Defence Emergency 199
Rescue Police 192, 4621111, 4637777
Fire Brigade 4617101
Blood Bank 475121
Traffic Police 4896390
Highway Police 5343402
Hotel Complaints 5605800
Public Security Dept. 4630321
J. Electricity Authority 5815615
Price Complaints 5661176
Water & Sewerage Complaints 4897467
Amman Municipality Complaints 4787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 0132
Central Amman Telephone Repairs 4623101
Abdali Tel. Repairs 5661101
Radio Jordan 4774111
Water Authority 5680100
J. Electricity Authority 5815615
Electric Power Co. 4636381
RJ Flight Information 44-53200
Queen Alia Intl. Airport 44-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
The Arab Centre for Heart and Sple

Palatine Pharmacy

(05)983562
EMERGENCIES
Food Control Centre 4637111
Civil Defence Department 5661111
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue 4630341
Civil Defence Emergency 199
Rescue Police 192, 4621111, 4637777
Fire Brigade 4617101
Blood Bank 475121
Traffic Police 4896390
Highway Police 5343402
Hotel Complaints 5605800
Public Security Dept. 4630321
J. Electricity Authority 5815615
Price Complaints 5661176
Water & Sewerage Complaints 4897467
Amman Municipality Complaints 4787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 0132
Central Amman Telephone Repairs 4623101
Abdali Tel. Repairs 5661101
Radio Jordan 4774111
Water Authority 5680100
J. Electricity Authority 5815615
Electric Power Co. 4636381
RJ Flight Information 44-53200
Queen Alia Intl. Airport 44-53200

AMMAN:
Firas Pharmacy 5661912
Al Salam Pharmacy 4636730
Mayadah Pharmacy 5537004
Ruka Al Dawa Pharmacy 5536169
IRBID:
Dr. Latif Al Shalabi (02)241789
Fou'ad Pharmacy (02)275360
ZARQA:
Dr. Walid
Balasch (05)982799

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (44)53200-5, where it should always be verified. Information on other flights can be supplied on phone 44 (52700). Information on Royal Wings flights can be supplied on phone 4875201-5

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
07:05 Sanaa (RJ)
08:15 Jeddah (add) (RJ)
09:00 Jeddah (add) (RJ)
09:00 Damascus (RJ)
09:20 Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
09:30 New Delhi (RJ)
10:00 Jeddah (RJ)
11:35 Beirut (RJ)
15:00 Jeddah (add) (RJ)
16:35 Jeddah (add) (RJ)
16:45 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
16:50 Kuwait (RJ)
17:00 Jeddah (add) (RJ)
18:00 London (RJ)
18:00 Jeddah (add) (RJ)
21:00 Bangkok, Doha (RJ)
21:50 Cairo (RJ)
23:15 Tel Aviv (add) (RJ)
23:59 Jeddah (add) (RJ)
02:20 Vienna (add) (RJ)
02:30 Casablanca, Tunis (RJ)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
08:30 Beirut (RJ)
10:00 Jeddah (add) (RJ)
10:45 Kuwait (RJ)
11:00 Jeddah (add) (RJ)
12:00 Jeddah (add) (RJ)
04:00 Jeddah (add) (RJ)
03:45 Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur (RJ)
Other Flights
04:10 London (BA)
08:20 Alexandria (BA)
09:30 Cairo (MS)
10:00 Khartoum (SD)
11:30 Sanaa (Y)
12:45 Kiev (6U)
13:20 Bahrain (GF)
14:45 Doha (QR)
15:05 Vienna (OS)
15:25 Dubai, Abu Dhabi (EK)
17:50 Istanbul (SD)
18:40 Beirut (ME)
20:05 Tel Aviv (LY)
20:30 Frankfurt, Damascus (LH)
01:25 Athens (OA)
02:00 Milan (AZ)
Royal Wings (RW)
08:50 Aqaba (arriving at QAIA)
17:30 Gaza (arriving at QAIA)
18:00 Aqaba (arriving at Marka Airport)
23:15 Tel Aviv (arriving at QAIA)
Royal Wings (RW)
08:30 Aqaba (from Marka Airport)
13:30 Gaza (from Marka Airport)
20:30 Aqaba (from QAIA) (RW)
21:00 Tel Aviv (from QAIA) (RW)

News in brief

King receives cables

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Abdullah on Sunday received congratulatory cables on the occasion of Eid Al Adha (feast of sacrifice) from Sultan of Brunei Hassan Balqiah and Nigerian President General Abdul Salam Abu Baker.

Jordan sends aid to Kosovo refugees

AMMAN (Petra) — The Jordanian Hashemite Charity, in conjunction with the Armed Forces and the Ministry of Health, will send 20 tonnes of humanitarian assistance on Thursday to the refugees and displaced people of the Balkans conflict. Charity Secretary General and Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Abdul Salam Abbadi said the organisation has prepared a Royal Air Force cargo plane, which includes medicines, food, blankets and tents. Abbadi said the charity is still receiving contributions to send another cargo plane next week.

Child dies in fall

AMMAN (J.T.) — Hosam Suleiman Tradat, six, died on Friday after he fell in a cesspool near Kufor Soum School. Irbid's Civil Defence is investigating the accident.

PM condoles Sheikh Sultan

AMMAN (Petra) — Prime Minister Abdur-Ra'uf S. Rawabdeh on Sunday sent a cable of condolence to Sheikh Sultan Al Qasimi, governor of Sharjah, over the death of his son Mohammad.

Lawzi receives Omani ambassador

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Information and Culture Nasser Lawzi on Sunday received Omani Ambassador to Jordan Hamad Ben Hilal Al Muamari. They discussed bilateral relations, as well as the scope of cooperation in the information and cultural fields.

Biltaji urges winter tourism

AQABA (Petra) — Minister of Tourism and Antiquities Aqel Biltaji on Sunday said that the private sector has been working on the development of touristic sites to attract tourists to the Kingdom. The minister, who was speaking at a reception for two Belgium tourist groups, called on concerned parties to develop "winter tourism" during Jordan's favourable winter climate. The minister also inspected Ghor Saffi's archaeological site, where the ministry has finalized a study to set up a museum.

UNICEF distributes books to children

AMMAN (J.T.) — The United Nations Children's Fund on Sunday distributed four collections of children stories to child care sections in several hospitals, orphanages and charities around the Kingdom as part of the Early Childhood Development Project. Director of the UNICEF's education projects Maha Humasi said the UNICEF is expected to publish another collection, written by a number of educationalists specialised in the field of early childhood.

CDD reports 132 accidents

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Civil Defence Department said on Sunday that it dealt with 132 accidents during the last 24 hours, which resulted in 25 injuries around the Kingdom. The accidents included 113 first aid cases, 17 fire extinguishing cases and 3 rescue cases. In Amman, the department said it put off fires in an Arab student's house, a shop, and a restaurant. The fires caused casualties but no deaths have been reported.

WHAT'S GOING ON

FILMS

- Swedish film "The Seventh Seal" at Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation, Jabal Amman, on Tuesday April 6 at 6:30 p.m.
- "The Peacemaker" at Books@Café, Jabal Amman on Tuesday April 6 at 8:30 p.m. (Tel. 4650457/8).

DOCUMENTARY ON POVERTY

- "Poverty: The Human Dimension" — Radio Jordan's documentary at 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. (The programme, broadcast every Monday at these times, attempts to shed light on the different dimensions of poverty in Jordan through a critical analysis of the various formal and informal agencies and programmes that provide assistance to the poor).

EXHIBITIONS

- "Photos from Berlin" by Bassam Lahoud at the University of Jordan, Faculty of Humanities, until April 5.
- Display of Iraq Al Amir collection at the Jordan Design and Trade Centre of the Noor Al Hussein Foundation, until April 29 (Tel. 5699141/2). (The exhibition includes handicraft, pottery, handwoven fabrics, cushions, handmade paper, and food).
- "Amman... A Meeting Point" by Swedish artists Ann Edholm and Hakan Rhenberg at Darat Al Funun, Jabal Weibdeh. Also displaying works by contemporary Arab artists, until April 22.
- Works on paper by Russian artist Yuri Pestov entitled "Al Ferdouse, the Rose Garden" at the Jordanian Plastic Artists Association, Jabal Weibdeh, until April 12 (Tel. 4623297).

Court sentences pair in murder case

By Rana Hussein

AMMAN — The Criminal Court on Monday sentenced a 35-year-old woman to seven-and-a-half years imprisonment after she was found guilty of killing her husband on November 16, 1997, in Sabab.

Sabah Awad first received a 15-year prison term by the court tribunal for shooting and killing her 45-year-old husband Bassam Ali, but her sentence was reduced to half because the family of the victim dropped charges against her.

Awad's younger brother, Mustafa, 26, was also convicted by the same court of complicity in the murder and was handed a five-year prison sentence. His sentence was also reduced to half by the tribunal.

According to court transcripts, the defendant began having problems with her husband in early July of 1997, "because the victim wanted to take a second wife and be abusing her."

Problems between the couple escalated, and reached a peak on the day of the murder, the court said.

"On the night of the incident, the couple had a quarrel, and Awad called her brother to come over and interfere," the court said.

When Mustafa arrived, the court said, the couple started arguing again. "Then Sabah got her husband's gun, asked her brother to load it, and shot her husband three times. Two of three bullets struck Ali's stomach killing him instantly, it added.

The verdicts, handed down by judges Mohammad Ajarmeh, Mifleb Mubeidin and Issa Hamdan, will automatically be reviewed by the Court of Cassation within 30 days.

Jordanian appointed IATA regional director

AMMAN (J.T.) — Raja Rifai has been appointed International Air Transport Association regional director-designate for infrastructure for the Middle East region.

He will replace Director Pam Soobarah upon his retirement next September. Rifai, an engineer, will be based in Amman and report directly to IATA headquarters in Montreal, Canada.

He is the first Jordanian to be selected to the post of director at any of the international aviation organisations.

Rifai is a former employee of the Jordanian Civil Aviation Authority where he held several high-level administrative and technical posts. Rifai was involved in the regional aviation activities as chairman of the Communications and Metrology Regional Group then as chairman of the Middle East Air Navigation Planning and Implementation Regional Group in 1998. He also served as chairman of the Middle East Air Navigation Conference that was held in Amman last year.

Diplomatic institute hosts peace game

AMMAN (J.T.) — The President of the Institute of Diplomacy (ID) Kamel Abu Jaber on Sunday addressed the opening session of a seminar entitled "Peace Game," calling for an international legislation allowing people from various nations to peacefully coexist regardless of their ethnic origin.

Abu Jaber, who deputised for HRH Prince Hassan, at the opening session discussed the situation in Kosovo. He remarked that power has become the international criterion for settling differences and disputes.

Also addressing the opening session of the seminar, organised by the ID in conjunction with the Jordan Armed Forces and UNESCO with support from the British Foreign Office, was the deputy chief of staff of the Jordan Armed Forces for intelligence who discussed the role of the United Nations in helping bring peace and security for the nations of the world.

He said the different governments had resorted to the U.N. in order to



Deputising for HRH Prince Hassan, ID President Kamel Abu Jaber on Sunday addresses the opening session of a seminar entitled "Peace Games."

find peaceful solutions for disputes among nations during the Cold War era. But he said that regrettably the U.N. role has not removed the danger of instability and regional conflicts which still threaten world peace. He said civil wars

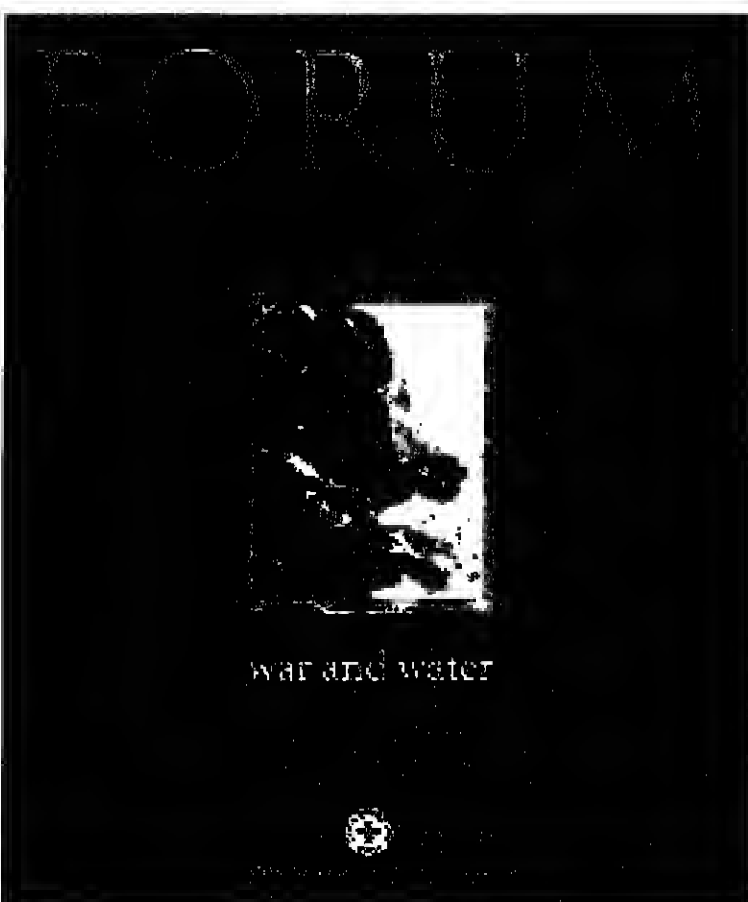
continue and spill over into neighbouring countries.

Tom Forstenser, the executive director of the UNESCO general secretariat, discussed the "culture of peace" and means of arriving at settlements that defuse disputes.

He said comprehensive peace does not hinge only on political considerations as cultural, scientific and educational issues are basic components of peace. These components are the concern of UNESCO which concentrates its efforts

towards achieving world peace and security. Abu Jaber later made remarks about Islam pointing out the peaceful existence among different religions in Jordan and touching on the question of "Islamophobia."

ICRC releases book on war and water



AMMAN (J.T.) — The International Committee of the Red Cross has launched a new, annual periodical intended to reflect and debate a given topic through a series of articles, written by journalists, and the Red Cross' outside and in-house specialists.

This year's issue of "Forum" is dedicated to the theme "War and Water," chosen for its extreme importance as the source of life, but also as a source of conflict and as a major concern in humanitarian action, said a press release from the ICRC.

The first issue of "Forum" tackles war and water issues from around the world, including the long-term effects of decaying infrastructures and how man copes in the aftermath of war.

A chapter entitled "Iraq: The Water Tragedy" written by Christine Aziz, a U.K.-based freelance journalist specialising in humanitarian issues, focuses on the collapse of one of the most sophisticated water installations in the region laid waste by economic sanctions. The collapse of the water system, wholly dependent on foreign spare parts, has resulted in a catastrophic decline in public health.

The ICRC reports that "a vicious circle has been created that has not yet been broken: most Iraqis lack the resources to ensure a proper diet for themselves and their families despite government subsidies, thus making them vulnerable to diseases carried in contaminated drinking water, which in turn are difficult to treat because of the ongoing scarcity of drugs and equipment."

A falling electricity system has further exacerbated water distribution, while agriculture is also suffering. The chapter also is highly critical of the oil for food deal.

Forum also elaborates on the burden placed on water systems by refugees and the displaced, the water crisis in Somalia and "violence through environmental discrimination."

The book draws attention to problems faced by affected populations with regard to water in times of conflict and describes or proposes solutions to deal with its lack, its excess or its contamination. The 100-page report is illustrated with colour and black and white photography and is supported by case studies, maps and in depth analysis.

Asfour announces creation of new QIZs in Mafrag, Karak

AMMAN (J.T.) — Minister of Industry and Trade Mohammad Asfour announced on Sunday that the government plans to create a Qualifying Industrial Zone (QIZ) in the Karak and Mafrag governorates in addition to the existing zone near Irbid and the Sheikh Hussein crossing point.

The minister said industries to be established in the two governorates should meet the conditions and specifications agreed on with the U.S. before industrial exports can be marketed duty and quota free in the U.S.

The Mafrag and Karak zone will not be restricted to

producing goods to be exported to the U.S. but will also manufacture products for export to any other country.

Asfour said the QIZ expansion in Jordan is to encourage investments in areas where the government plans to provide the necessary investment climate and to create new job opportunities.

According to the minister, a special committee will have to review any commodity produced at the zones to ensure conformity to the conditions set under the QIZ agreement concluded by the U.S., Israel and Jordan in 1997.

The U.S., the main sponsor of the peace process, has thrown its weight behind the QIZ as a step to encourage some of the much-promised economic dividends of the Jordan-Israel 1994 peace treaty.

Asfour noted that products manufactured at the QIZ have the chance to sell freely in the huge U.S. market, and creating the new zones in Karak and Mafrag will no doubt encourage investors to come to Jordan.

New investment projects at the QIZ are also expected to bring modern technology and foreign expertise to the Kingdom.

Jordan to attend industrial fairs

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordan will take part in several international industrial fairs abroad from now until the end of June, according to the Jordan Exports Development and Commercial Centres Corporation.

A JEDCO statement said Jordan will participate in the Afro-Arab fair in Dakar, Senegal, from April 15 to 25. Twelve companies will display their industrial products at that fair.

Another fair will be held in Bulgaria from May 3-8, and 18 of the Kingdom's industrial companies will be represented, the statement said.

The third event will be the Expo International Fair in the Arab Emirate of Sharjah from April 28 until May 3, 1999. Twenty Jordanian industrial companies will exhibit their wares.

The JEDCO statement said Jordan will hold an industrial fair of its national products in the Palestinian city of Gaza between June 10 and 19, and to date, more than 100 Jordanian companies have applied to participate.

Jordan also will participate in a European Union-organised fair in Vienna, Austria, from May 10-11.

The statement said JEDCO, which serves as national import-export coordinator, will be represented at a meeting of Arab importers and exporters of industrial products. The meeting will be held in Cairo from May 25-27. At least 20 Jordanian firms will participate.

JEDCO said it is currently preparing for a visit by a Jordanian economic delegation to Algeria. At least 33 local industrial companies have registered to participate, according to the statement.

Fayez receives Egyptian ambassador

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Labour Eid Fayez on Sunday received Egyptian Ambassador to Jordan Hani Riyad and discussed with him bilateral cooperation in various fields, particularly labour-related matters.

Fayez and the Egyptian ambassador also reviewed the situation of Egyptian labourers in the Kingdom in line with bilateral agreements which provided for each worker to get a work permit in advance.

Fayez also expressed Jordan's appreciation of the role

of Egyptian workers in the Kingdom.

The ambassador voiced Egypt's understanding of Jordanian procedures to regulate the local labour market.

The two sides also agreed on a mechanism to recruit Egyptian workers to the Kingdom.

The minister also received Omani Ambassador Hamad Ben Hilal Muamari. They discussed bilateral relations.

Also discussed were the affairs of the Omani students in Jordanian universities.

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Deadly tornado kills at least 6 in Louisiana

BENTON, La. (R) — A deadly tornado killed at least six people and injured 100 more when it ripped a 6.4 km swath through northwestern Louisiana on Saturday, officials said.

Witnesses said the huge twister left a trail of destruction that included several dozen trailer homes and houses when it touched down near Benton, a town of 2,000 about 16 km north of Shreveport, La., at 4:30 p.m. Cst (2230 GMT).

Debris from the broken buildings was strewn throughout the area.

"This is a terrible, terrible disaster," Bossier Parish Sheriff Larry Deen said. "I've lived here all my life and there's never been anything like this."

"Quite frankly, I don't think we've found nearly all of them (the fatalities) yet," he said. "We know there are bodies. We know there's dead people. We know there's lots of walking wounded."

Bossier Parish office of emergency preparedness director Chuck Mazzotti told Reuters that six deaths were confirmed at the hardest hit trailer park and officials were trying to confirm reports of three more deaths near Cypress lake.

"There may well be more," he said. "The half-mile square mobile home park was just destroyed, and until we get someone who had worked there, we don't know how many trailers there were or the number of people in them. We don't even know how many people we're looking for."

Deen said the tornado, which was several hundred yards wide, picked up mobile homes and threw them on top of others as it swept through the area.

"We've got mobile homes piled on top of each other two and three deep. It's night and it's going to take time to search through all that debris," Deen said.

Rescue teams, includ-

ing some from the Louisiana National Guard and Barksdale Air Force base, were to work through the night, Mazzotti said.

Powerful search lights from the air force base were brought to the scene to help workers sift through the wreckage.

Deen said up to 100 people were injured by the twister.

"Every hospital in Shreveport and Bossier city is full up tonight with those hurt the worst."

Hospitals in the area said late Saturday at least five people were in critical condition. Many of the injured suffered cuts and bruises from flying debris.

An employee at Bossier medical centre said at least one local television station issued an emergency warning to people in the area to take cover when the tornado was spotted on weather radar.

"That may have saved some people, but only if they were watching television, the employee said.

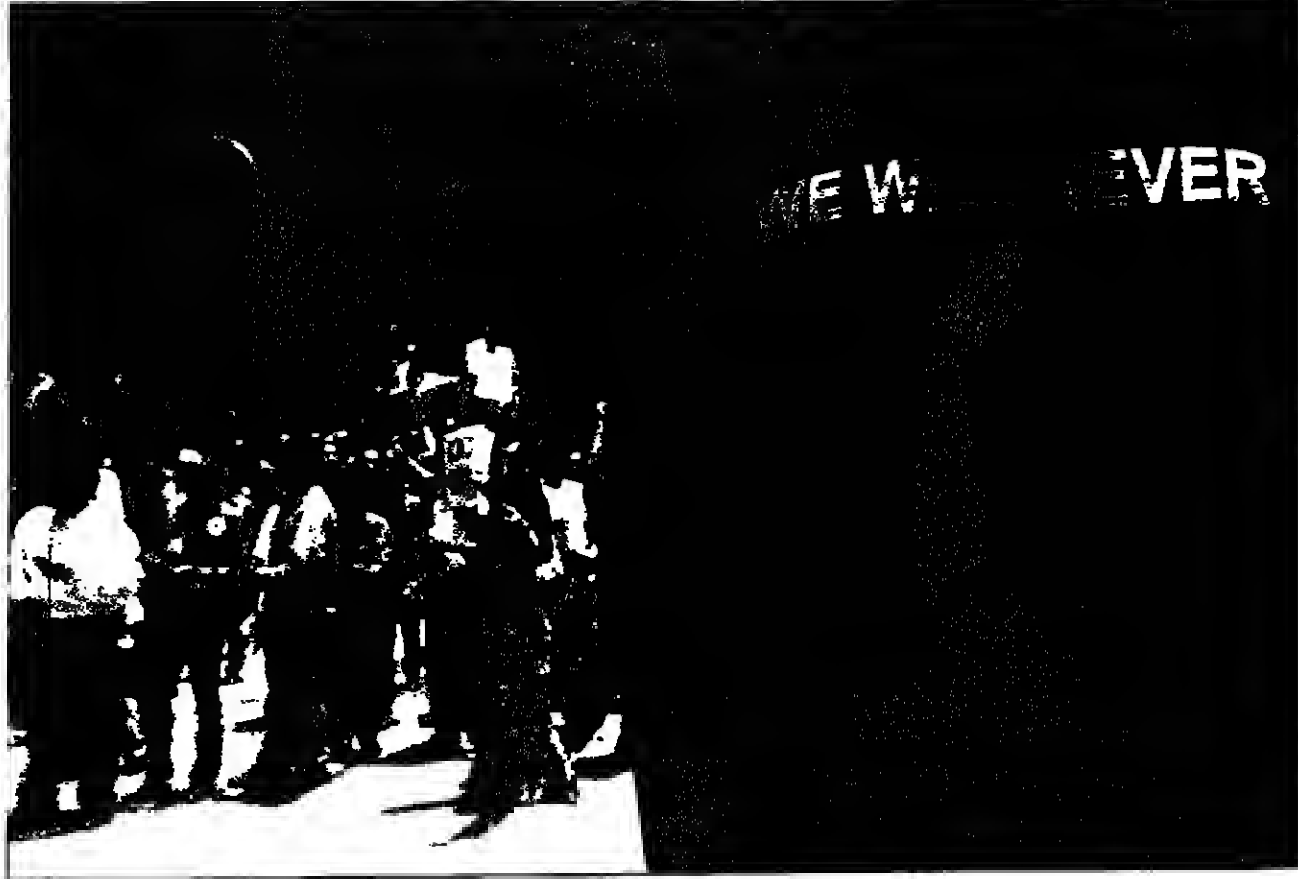
The worst hit area appeared to be Hay Meadow mobile home park, but the twister also ploughed through two modest subdivisions before striking the Cypress lake recreational area of camps and homes.

said Bossier sheriff's office spokesman Ed Baswell.

"They're working with chain saws and heavy equipment to try to get through the downed trees, but it may take a while," he said.

"This isn't going to be over in the next day or two, especially at the mobile home park," Baswell said. "It (the tornado) stayed on the ground quite a while."

Before touching down about 5.6 km south of Benton, the tornado caused some property damage but no injuries in Caddo Parish, west of Benton, a spokesman for the Caddo Parish sheriff's office said. No injuries were reported there.



A supporter of Anwar Ibrahim wears a T-shirt bearing 'We Will Never Surrender' while others chant 'Reformasi' (reform) and 'Allahu Akbar' (Allah is Great) during the launching of a new party in Kuala Lumpur April 4. Wan Azizah, Anwar's wife, launched a new Malaysian party on Sunday, placing the sacked finance minister firmly in the opposition camp and legitimising his 'reformasi' movement (Reuters photo)

Anwar's wife launches new party, calls opposition to topple Mahathir

KUALA LUMPUR (AFP) — The wife of ousted Malaysian deputy premier Anwar Ibrahim launched a new political party Sunday and appealed to opposition groups to unite to oust Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad.

"Political parties and non-government organisations must work together and set aside their differences in order to free Malaysia from continuing stranglehold of crisis and oppression," said Wan Azizah Wan Ismail, president of the National Justice Party (Keadilan).

"Our party is prepared to sacrifice its own interests in order to achieve the larger goal of forging a credible alternative to the Barisan Nasional (National Front)," she told a cheering crowd of about 3,000.

Anwar himself, in a message from jail, fiercely attacked Mahathir and what he called corruption and cronyism.

Other key personalities in the party are Chandra Muzaffar, a wheelchair-bound critic of Mahathir, Tian Chua, chairman of the Coalition for People's Democracy, and Marina Yusoff, a former member of the premier's UMNO

supreme council. Mahathir, 73, is the president of the dominant United Malays National Organisation. He is also the chairman of the ruling National Front coalition and has ruled Malaysia for 17 years.

Mahathir meanwhile has been admitted to a heart institute with a lung infection, the official Bernama news agency said Sunday.

Bernama said the 73-year-old leader had been at the National Heart Centre since last Friday after his return from Saudi Arabia where the premier performed Hajj.

The prime minister's department, in a brief statement Sunday, described his condition as "stable" and that he would remain in hospital for a few days.

The government's term does not expire until April next year but there is speculation it will call a snap election amid signs of economic recovery.

Anwar, 52, once Mahathir's heir apparent, launched the reform movement after he was sacked from his office and from UMNO last September. He was subsequently arrested and jailed with 10 counts of

corruption and sodomy. He is on trial on four of the corruption charges, which allege abuse of his official powers to cover up sexual misconduct allegations. The hearing ended Thursday and the verdict is due on April 14.

Pointing out the party logo of an eye, Azizah said it was a symbol both of its struggle for truth and justice and of the infamous black eye incident.

"It is a symbol of our quest for the truth. It is a symbol of our struggle for justice itself — 'eye' that seeks justice," she added.

Rahim Noor, national police chief at the time, has admitted assaulting Anwar while he was in police custody. Anwar's subsequent appearance in court with a black eye sparked international outrage.

Anwar described the formation of Keadilan as inevitable and launched a stinging attack on Mahathir. "Our country is in the grip of a severe crisis which finds its root causes in widespread corruption, abuse of power and the practice of nepotism and cronyism," he said in a speech read out by his former aide, Mohammad Ezam Noor.

"Mahathir and his minions

will continue to orchestrate massive campaigns to instil fear towards the reform movement."

Anwar appealed to UMNO members to fight what he called oppression and injustice. "Truth and justice must transcend political boundaries."

Anwar is not a member of the new party but officials said he would offer his support in a move to unify the opposition. He has said he expects to be found guilty on April 14 and go to jail.

Analysts have said Keadilan could provide a credible third force after UMNO and the Parti Islam Semalaysia (PAS) but the ruling party was quick to dismiss it.

A senior UMNO member who declined to be identified described Keadilan as a party formed to take revenge on Mahathir. "It has no track record. It only hopes to play the role of spoiler to enable to enable Parti Islam Semalaysia to win in constituencies whose margin of victory for UMNO is narrow," he said.

The National Front has 167 seats, PAS seven and the Democratic Action Party nine seats in the 192-member parliament.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Bangladesh opposition leader appears in court in graft case

DHAKA (AFP) — A Dhaka court Sunday granted bail to opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) chief and former Prime Minister Khaleda Zia after she appeared in a corruption case. Judge Fazlul Karim of the Special Divisional Court fixed May 12 for indicting Zia on a charge that she misappropriated 6.3 million taka (\$196,780) from national exchequer for decorating her private residence in cantonment barracks in Dhaka while in power from 1991-1996. The court exempted her personal appearance during the trial of the case in which she might face a maximum seven-year imprisonment if found guilty. The BNP has rejected the charge calling it "politically motivated" and alleged that ruling Awami League of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina Wajed was trying to tarnish her image by filing the case. "She has not committed any criminal offence," Zia's chief counsellor Moudud Ahmed told the court in Dhaka's old district as hundreds of supporters chanted anti-government slogans outside. Zia, flanked by dozens of lawyers, sat in the crowded courtroom as her counsellor filed a petition seeking bail and exemptions from her personal appearance in court when the trial starts. Another charge of "misuse of power" against the former premier is currently being stayed on an high court order following an opposition petition.

Blast damages security services building in Moscow

MOSCOW (AFP) — An explosion shook a building belonging to Russia's security service overnight, slightly injuring two people, Russian media reported Sunday. The blast, which went off at around 3:20 a.m. (2320 GMT Saturday), blew a one-square-metre (11 sq ft) hole in the wall of the Federal Security Service (FSB) building on the ground floor and shattered windows in surrounding houses. Russian television pictures showed two guards at the building sustained light cuts from flying glass as a result of the blast, equal to one kilogramme of TNT. FSB spokesman Alexander Zdanovich told the private NTV television. The spokesman said the explosion was a terrorist act designed not so much to maim as to grab headlines, and said it could be linked to a less powerful blast which went off in the building last August. "The perpetrators planted this explosive device counting more on the public effect," Zdanovich said. "The time was not a coincidence because at this time there were virtually no people around. It was a demonstrative act," he said, adding that a criminal case had been opened into the incident. The building is located in the heart of Moscow, close to the FSB headquarters and not far from the Kremlin. Parliament speaker Gennady Seleznyov said the explosion was intended as a show of force by criminal elements nervous of the authorities' new-found zeal in battling crime. "The criminal world has felt that the authorities are starting to attack them and really battle against corruption and organised crime," Seleznyov was quoted by Interfax as saying in Saint Petersburg, Russia's second largest city. "Criminals are trying to show through this that they are strong."

Green groups sound alarm over Cambodian-origin garden furniture

PHNOM PENH (AFP) — Western shoppers have been urged not to buy wooden garden furniture labelled "Made in Vietnam," with two major green groups warning that the products often come from Cambodia's devastated forests. In a report received here Sunday, the British-based Global Witness and Friends of the Earth detailed how products labelled "eco-friendly" often mislead buyers about their origin in illegally logged forests. "Most of the furniture labelled 'Made in Vietnam' is from timber either illegally imported from Cambodia or illegally harvested in Vietnam," said the report. "One would be hard pressed to find something less friendly to the environment or to the way of life of those hill tribes and others who depend on forests for their livelihood." Despite recent assurances from Prime Minister Hun Sen that the Cambodian government would crack down on the illegal trade, the report said senior government officials were directly involved in the lucrative business. "The industrial-scale illegal timber trade in Cambodia has been used to finance top-level corruption, played a key role in the outcome of Cambodia's recent elections and provided secret revenue for the military," it said. "The reality is that to buy Vietnamese garden furniture, made out of Cambodian timber, is to directly contribute to the destruction of Cambodia's forests that are set to be commercially logged out within four years." After pressure from foreign donors and the World Bank, the government this year unveiled a highly publicised logging crackdown. However Global Witness has argued that the real culprits — the military — remain largely unaffected by the crackdown, which it says has hit local consumption but not exports.

Kyrgyz prime minister dies

BISHKEK (AFP) — Kyrgyz Prime Minister Djumabek Ibrahimov died of stomach cancer at a Bishkek hospital Sunday, his spokesman said. Ibrahimov, 53, had been in poor health since Kyrgyz President Askar Akayev appointed him prime minister on Dec. 25 after the former nine-month-old government was sacked for failing to deal with the country's worsening economic crisis. At the time of Ibrahimov's appointment, the new prime minister had said he would not live until the summer, but he wanted to die as prime minister of this Central Asian republic of 4.5 million people. On March 1, the ailing prime minister took what was officially described as a 10-day holiday, during which time he was hospitalised at the Moscow Oncological Centre. He returned to his homeland on March 31, checking into a hospital for top government officials in Bishkek where he died surrounded by family and friends, spokesman Kylych Dosumbetov told AFP. He was married and the father of six children from two marriages. Ibrahimov's health had been declining since he was diagnosed with cancer of the stomach and spleen in 1995 and was operated on at the Kremlin Hospital in Moscow. After his recovery, the former mayor of the Kyrgyz capital, Bishkek, became a trusted colleague of Akayev, rising to the top of the government. His former posts include state secretary, head of the president's administration and head of the State Property Committee.

Military shell kills two in Kashmir

NEW DELHI (AFP) — Two people were killed when a military shell exploded near Kashmir's border with Pakistan, the Press Trust of India (PTI) reported Sunday. Eight others were injured in the blast late Saturday near Uri town, nearly 100 kilometres from Srinagar, the summer capital of Kashmir state. The shell had fallen in a forest along the border and exploded when a group of villagers played with it, PTI said.

Sri Lanka poll campaign ends with bombing

COLOMBO (AFP) — An opposition office was bombed in Sri Lanka Sunday, killing at least one man, as political parties rounded up their bitterly fought campaigns ahead of a crucial council election, police said.

The opposition United National Party (UNP) office in the central town of Kegalle was attacked by gunmen believed to be rival politicians, raising tensions ahead of Tuesday's provincial council vote.

UNP leader and former Premier Ranil Wickremesinghe said the bombing had happened because police had failed to investigate a series of attacks against opposition

candidates in the past month.

"We are demanding a free and a fair election and what is at stake is not just the five provincial councils but the people's right to exercise their vote," Wickremesinghe told reporters here.

He said he had asked President Chandrika Kumaratunga to implement a series of measures decided by an all-party election monitoring panel to ensure there was no rigging or violence during polling on Tuesday.

Under election laws, campaigning after Saturday night is illegal and all liquor stores will be closed on Monday and Tuesday.

"The sentiments expressed by the government calling for free elections will only remain sentiments unless the executive does not implement the decisions," he said.

He said his UNP was keen to ensure there was no repetition of a council vote in January where the ruling People's Alliance won amid allegations from private poll monitors that the vote was the most fraudulent ever seen here.

The private Centre for Monitoring Election Violence (CMEV) said it had received nearly 1,300 complaints relating to violence during campaigning in the past month.

At least six people were

killed during the campaign, four as a result of intra-party rivalries rather than in clashes between opposing parties.

The CMEV said it expected more violence Tuesday in the Western and Central provinces.

Even though the election is for five provincial councils, the vote has generated national interest because it is believed the results will point to a trend at the parliamentary and presidential elections due between August and November next year.

"In general, the Western and Central Provinces are the most violent and volatile," the CMEV said in a seven-page statement.

However, Sri Lanka President Chandrika Kumaratunga has lambasted the CMEV and accused it of being a "cat's paw" of an unnamed foreign espionage agency.

Kumaratunga told a public rally last week that "foreign forces" were funding the CMEV to discredit the government before Tuesday's voting in the Central, Western, North-Central, Uva and Sabaragamuwa provinces.

"These forces together with big businessmen do not like our trade policies which prevent them from exploiting the people," she said.

The CMEV receives money from the Asia Foundation, which in turn is

partly funded by the U.S. Congress. It has said that a majority of complaints received were against Kumaratunga's People's Alliance.

CMEV spokesman Waruna Karunatilake denied the allegations and said the government had launched a smear campaign against them in a bid to clear the way for more violence and vote-rigging on Tuesday.

"People no longer believe in the 1970s rhetoric of foreign espionage behind attempts to destabilise a government etc.," Karunatilake said. "The government is trying to insult the intelligence of the voters."

Spanish journalist detained in Pristina calls for end to NATO strikes

MADRID (R) — One of two Spanish television journalists detained by Serb police has appeared on Serb television and called for an end to NATO air strikes, Spanish newspapers reported on Sunday.

Jon Sistiaga, one of two Telecinco journalists detained by Serb police on the border with Macedonia, made the comments from Pristina, where he was taken by police.

The newspaper El Pais described Sistiaga's voice as "altered" and state radio said it was likely he had been forced to speak.

Surrounded by television cameras, still cameras and film belonging to a Dutch photographer who was also being held, Sistiaga said all three had been treated well and allowed to walk around Pristina.

Both Spanish and Dutch forces have been taking part in NATO's airstrikes, intended to stop repression

of Kosovo's ethnic Albanians by Yugoslav security forces.

"We can see that life is normal here. We can see that the shops are open and people are out on the streets. No one is forcing refugees to leave and no one is telling them to go," Sistiaga said in English.

Repeatedly saying it was his "personal opinion", Sistiaga urged an end to the bombing.

"This is my personal opinion, but I think that

the person that has the power to stop this bombing must stop the NATO bombing," Sistiaga said.

"We saw so many civilian buildings that have been targeted by NATO aircraft. Some of the buildings were near to some military targets, but the buildings, the civilian buildings, were hit by the bombs... What I can say as a person, my personal opinion, is that this is a crime against civilians, Serbs and Albanians."

Telecinco said on Saturday that Sistiaga had called the television station that day and said he and cameraman Bernabe Dominguez were being held by police in Pristina and were fine.

It said he had been forced to speak to his colleagues in Madrid in English so that police could understand.

Telecinco said Spanish Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar and Foreign Minister Abel Matutes had

demanding the men's release.

The Yugoslav ambassador in Madrid said as long as the two were found to be genuine journalists they should have no problem.

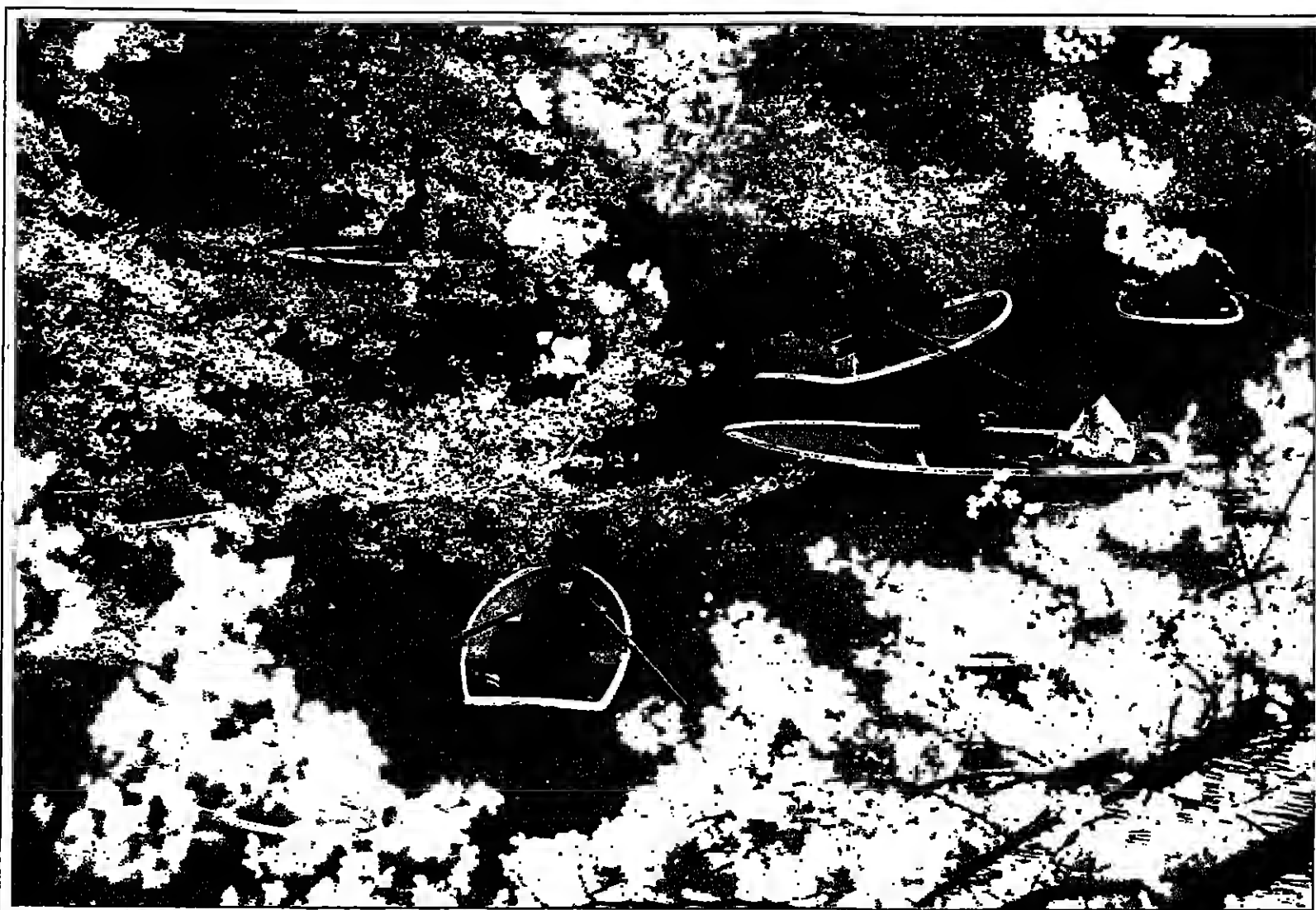
Sistiaga and Dominguez were detained on Friday as they were interviewing ethnic Albanian refugees and Serbian police on a train heading for the Macedonian border town of Blace.

Opposition leader in court in graft case

Increases security services in Moscow

World News

Jordan Times, Monday, April 5, 1999 5



Holiday makers on row boats float under a canopy of cherry blossoms in Tokyo April 4. Millions of Japanese residents took advantage of a weekend of good weather as they went to parks and other sites to view the seasonal cherry blossoms (Reuters photo)

Taiwan's home-made missile boats a failure, paper says

TAIPEI (AFP) — Taiwan's state-run China Shipbuilding Corp. (CSBC) has built five 500-tonne patrol boats for the navy but none of them has passed the tests required for them to join the fleet, it was reported Sunday.

"The naval buildup is way behind schedule as none of the boats has joined the navy since the first one 'Tan Chiang' was christened in June," the United Daily News said.

It said the CSBC had to pay the navy one million

Taiwan dollars (\$30,190) per day for failing to honor the contract.

No naval officials were immediately available for comments.

The navy last year awarded CSBC a 5.5 billion Taiwan dollar (\$166.0 million) contract to build 11 patrol boats modelled on the "Ching Ching" prototype, put into force in 1994.

The paper said disputes stemmed from the poor performance of the reconnaissance and fire-control

system made by the Contraves Brashear Co. of the United States, which features a laser distance measuring equipment and an infrared thermal image facility.

The boat is also equipped with a Danish-made radar designed to stop smuggling and ships from sneaking into the island's territorial waters, the paper added.

CSBC admitted delay in completing the construction projects, but blamed bad weather and said it had not violated the contract.

Since the prototype's commissioning, the project was shelved after local agents complained of irregularities on the engines, fire control systems and sonar on naval vessels.

The navy did not say why it shifted to the U.S. system instead of keeping the Israeli-made Sea Eye fire control system already in operation on the prototype.

Local newspapers have said the decision might have been prompted by fears of increasingly closer

military cooperation between Israel and arch-rival China.

CSBC has built for the navy seven Cheng Kung-class frigates, 4,000-tonne warships on the blueprint of U.S.-built Perry frigates.

Beijing has repeatedly threatened to invade Taiwan should the island declare formal independence from the "motherland" prompting Taipei to continue its military buildup despite the commencement of cross-strait civil contacts in the late 1980s.

Chinese dissidents step up protests

BELING (AFP) — Chinese dissidents stepped up protests during the festival of the dead Sunday, visiting the graves of victims of the 1989 Tiananmen Square bloodshed and defying an unwritten ban on returning from exile.

An activist, who visited the graves of victims of the 1989 Tiananmen Square crackdown against pro-democracy activists, was detained for 20 hours by police in the eastern Chinese city of Hangzhou, activists with the outlawed opposition China Democracy Party (CDP) said.

"They told me I was being detained for illegal activities," CDP member Su Huibing told AFP on his release. "The conditions were very bad. I was in there for 20 hours and they wouldn't let me sleep."

"They told me, if you carry on with these activities we will charge you and take you to court."

Su was detained after trying to sweep the graves of the Tiananmen victims as part of the Qing Ming (commemoration) festival.

Meanwhile, U.S.-based CDP activist and veteran pro-democracy campaigner Wang Xizhe defied an effective ban on returning dissidents and boarded a flight from New York to Beijing, ostensibly to carry out memorial rites for his father, who died in February.

Wang took an Asiana Airlines flight Saturday evening and was scheduled to arrive in Beijing at 12.00 p.m. (0400 GMT) Monday, an overseas branch of the China

Democracy Party said in a statement.

Pro-democracy activists returning from overseas have in the past either been turned back at the border or arrested and jailed.

"Wang's application to return for the Qing Ming festival was ignored, and effectively refused," the group said.

"But he has decided to make the trip in order to assert the rights of exiled dissidents to return to their motherland in accordance with UN human rights covenants."

Hangzhou CDP activist Wang Rongqing said 50 CDP protesters in Hangzhou split into two groups Saturday to pay their respects at the graves of victims of the bloody crackdown on June 4, 1989, at separate cemeteries.

"When we got there, the police were waiting," Wang said. "They warned us off sweeping the graves."

He said police confiscated a wreath that his group tried to lay at the site, but that the other group's wreath had remained.

"The wreaths bore the message — 'to those who laid down their lives for democracy and freedom,'" the Hong Kong-based Information Centre of Human Rights and Democratic Movement in China said in a statement.

Eight van-loads of police were waiting for the CDP activists, and ordered both groups of protesters to disperse, it said.

According to Chinese tradition, Qing Ming on April 5 is the day for honouring one's ancestors

by visiting cemeteries to sweep the graves, cut back any weeds and place fresh flowers.

Qing Ming has in the past witnessed spontaneous political demonstrations against the communist leadership.

Wang Xizhe's 80-year-old father, Wang Zhongxuan, died in hospital in the southeastern city of Guangzhou in February, and his son lodged a formal application to return to China to carry out graveside rites.

But his application was ignored, according to the CDP statement.

Wang Xizhe fled to the United States via Hong Kong in October 1996, a few days after signing a declaration urging Tibetan independence. He was the last dissident to be smuggled out of China through Hong Kong before the territory reverted to mainland rule in July 1997.

A 50-year-old former factory worker from Guangzhou, Wang Xizhe was released on parole on Feb. 3, 1993, after serving nearly 12 years of a 14-year term for counter-revolutionary activities.

The CDP's New York committee appealed to the authorities in Seoul not to turn him back during a stopover in the South Korean capital and to allow him to fly to Beijing.

The authorities have tightened security ahead of Monday's festival honouring the dead, which forms the prelude to a series of highly symbolic dates leading up to the 10th anniversary of the Tiananmen Square massacre on June 4.

NATO buys more time to help Kosovo refugees

BRUSSELS (R) — NATO has put Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic on notice that it will press on with its ferocious air bombardment until he pulls all his troops and special police units out of Kosovo.

The alliance has made clear it is prepared to pursue this aim even if it cannot stem the flow of hundreds of thousands of refugees being driven into neighbouring countries in what it describes as a pre-planned programme of ethnic cleansing.

While Milosevic is seen as trying to alter the facts on the ground in Kosovo by forcing its ethnic Albanian population to flee, NATO has told him it will bring the refugees back home under the protection of an international security force.

But before this force can start to do its work, NATO wants all Serb soldiers and special police out of the province.

This would deal a body blow to the proposed peace package which emerged from negotiations at Rambouillet in France earlier

this year and envisaged a limited Yugoslav security presence in Kosovo as part of a settlement.

NATO's proposed new goals, which have yet to be formally endorsed by the alliance, came in a brief statement issued late on Saturday in which Secretary General Javier Solana demanded that Belgrade "stop all repressive and combat activities and withdraw its forces from Kosovo".

Milosevic must "accept arrangements in which all refugees can return safely to Kosovo under the protection of an international security force", Solana said.

Solana's statement noted that a settlement "based on" Rambouillet remained the alliance's ultimate objective, but did not make clear how that would be achieved now that Milosevic has, in NATO's eyes, forfeited the right to govern Kosovo.

Under Rambouillet, Kosovo would achieve far-reaching autonomy but remain ultimately under the control of Belgrade.

The alliance says that

since NATO's air raids began on March 24, Yugoslav forces have driven 290,000 ethnic Albanians out of Kosovo in a brutal effort to change the demographic landscape in favour of the Serb minority.

NATO remains adamant that it does not plan to send ground troops to fight their way into Kosovo. The Serb presence must be removed by air power, which the alliance has been reinforcing in recent days.

NATO's 250 combat planes have been unable to press on with the list of targets drawn up by alliance planners because of low cloud over Yugoslavia.

Their self-imposed rules of engagement designed to minimise civilian casualties mean that bombs cannot be dropped unless pilots are sure of hitting their targets.

This delay to recent days has allowed Yugoslav soldiers and police to press on with the business of driving ethnic Albanians out of Kosovo.

The process of emptying the province of its 90 per cent Albanian population

could be complete within the next 10 to 20 days if expulsions continue at the present rate, NATO estimates.

But by signalling that it intends to escort expelled refugees back into the province once air power has forced Yugoslav security forces to retreat, NATO will hope that it has closed off an important option for Milosevic.

The alliance earlier said it was in a "race against time" to head off the Yugoslav campaign of ethnic cleansing.

Now, by no longer making the stopping of ethnic cleansing the main measure of its success, it has given itself more time to "degrade" what it calls the Yugoslav war machine to the point where it can no longer remain in Kosovo.

Time will help NATO bring its formidable arsenal to bear, but it remains to be seen whether the alliance can overcome what has become almost a mantra among military theorists — that air power alone cannot take territory.

Two survivors of ship collision handed over to North Korean diplomats

COLOMBO (AP) — Two North Korean survivors of a ship collision were handed over to diplomats Sunday, officials said.

The two seamen — the only survivors from their vessel — were handed over Sunday to diplomats from their country aboard the South Korean vessel, said M.N. Riyal, an official from M.A. Razak and Co., local agents of the North Korean ship, M.V. Manpok.

They will be repatriated back to North Korea as

soon as the paperwork is completed, Riyal said.

The seamen were picked up by the South Korean ship, The Duke, with which the North Korean vessel collided. The Duke sailed into Colombo Friday, where it is being repaired.

Rescuers have so far found only two empty life rafts, prompting Sri Lankan officials to believe that the others died after the ships collided.

The North Korean vessel, carrying cement and with a

crew of 39 collided with The Duke late Wednesday, some 550 kilometres east of Sri Lanka's southern port city of Galle.

Ships in the area have been asked to look for survivors, said S. Sigamany, chief officer of Colombo radio, which relays distress calls and coordinates port-related services.

The North Korean survivors were on duty on Manpok's bridge.

The remaining 37 were believed trapped inside

their cabins and the engine room when the ship sank with its cargo of thousands of tonnes of cement.

It is the first known collision between ships from the rival neighbours in international waters. The Korean peninsula was divided into the Communist North and the capitalist South in 1945.

They are technically still at war as their 1950-53 conflict ended with an armistice, not a peace treaty.

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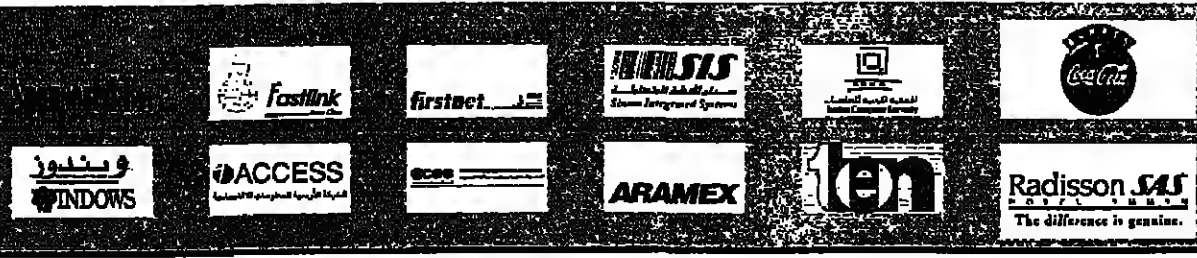
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Tall order

SOME MIGHT say it was predictable that Prime Minister Abdur-Ra'uf S. Rawabdeh's policy statement submitted to Parliament on Saturday focused on the state of the country's economy. His Majesty King Abdullah had made the stimulation of the stagnant economy the centrepiece of his letter of designation to the prime minister. Rawabdeh pledged, therefore, to pull the economy out of recession by speeding up IMF-agreed free market reforms, eliminating red tape, boosting investment and clamping down on corruption. This multifaceted panacea to our economic woes has all the markings of previous prescriptions to end the growing economic strains, many of which may have started with the endorsement of the principles of privatisation and IMF reforms.

All governments in the past also pledged to uproot corruption, reduce bureaucracy and improve the investment climate. And all former prime ministers failed to deliver on these shared policies as well. This is where Rawabdeh could make a difference.

Equally important is the King's earlier references to poverty, rampant unemployment and the need to provide a social safety net to protect the underprivileged. The question that the government has yet to respond to is how to reconcile privatisation and the IMF-requested reforms with the other pressing needs of addressing poverty and unemployment. There was a time when the ILO had called on countries experiencing our kind of economic constraints, poverty and unemployment to create job opportunities by establishing labour-intensive industries and executing megaprojects for this basic objective. Privatisation per se runs counter to this objective and so do some IMF reforms. How then to address the state of our economy, which is admittedly in a deep recession, by sound economic principles such as privatisation and free market dynamics and still reduce unemployment and poverty? We have yet to hear the government's thoughts on how to reconcile these seemingly diametrically opposed goals. In the final analysis this haunting issue lies perhaps in the conflict between theory and practice.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al-Rai's Mahmoud Rimawi commented on the NATO bombings in Kosovo and asked why the U.S. does not show the same vigour in searching for regional solutions here and apply the same standards to Israel, which is destroying the peace process. The U.S. is doing nothing about either the ethnic cleansing in Jerusalem or the Jewish state's refusal to allow refugees and the displaced to return to their land in accordance with U.N. resolutions, Rimawi said. Nothing indicates that the U.S. is willing to discuss such issues, which relate to the ethical application of war and peace policies, he said. It has been said that the U.S., in its war against the Serbian leadership, wants to gain the final say in the security of Europe, a continent with which it has joint strategic, cultural and religious interests, the writer noted. In contrast, U.S. policy in the Middle East has been to support one country against 20 for five decades, during which the superpower has been silent over Israeli violations of international law and human rights, Rimawi argued, and asked: if the Kosovo peace is worth fighting for, what about the Arab-Israeli peace?

Al-Dustour's editorial said Prime Minister Abdur-Ra'uf S. Rawabdeh's policy statement to Parliament has met citizens' expectations because it was realistic and clear. The statement is not only worth the vote of confidence but also support in accordance with the letter of designation and His Majesty King Abdullah's directives, added the editorial. It was notable that the statement included the issue of public administration and its restructuring through focus on qualified leadership, the paper said adding that the government also decisively promised to combat corruption. The paper also commended the government's "courage" to accurately describe the problems — economic, water and unemployment — facing the country, outlining its vision to tackle challenges and reassure citizens. The statement, which stipulated that solutions are not going to be easy, reveals a firm determination to meet economic, administrative and social challenges with the cooperation of the three constitutional powers, and in accordance with the principles of democracy, political pluralism and openness, said the newspaper.

Choosing what not to do

Economic Review



Dr. Yusuf Mansur

no firm can become competitive by producing everything.

Nations that have stressed the comparative approach to building their economies have ultimately failed and seen the dream of sustainable development become a sustainable mirage. According to U.N. statistics there is an inverse relationship between the level of income in a country (adjusted by purchasing power) to the percentage exports in raw materials. In

other words, the larger the share of raw materials in exports, the lower the real income of the nation. Furthermore, any strategy that begins with the comparative advantage of low wages must have clear and timed plans to shift away from them into the competitive advantage of high value added and high wages.

Companies and investors who think first about producing the good and then think of the market or the consumer, who stress the duty free side of inputs while requesting protection; who do not know their relative competitive position or do not care to know it; who think defensively and can not trust cooperation with their competitors; and view the government in a paternalistic sense are thinking from within the old, now defunct comparative advantage model. It is not easy to change to the new model, but if one starts to think that success depends on what we choose not to do, then he/she would have made a correct start.

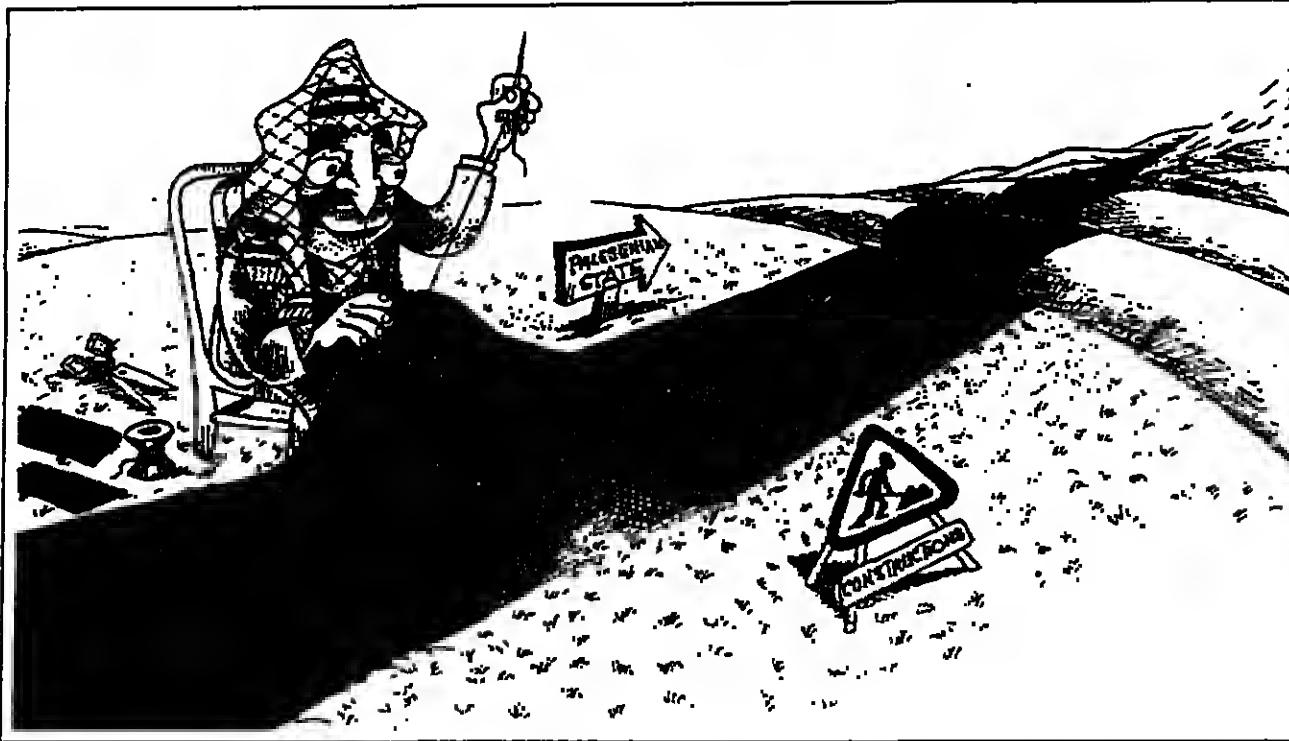
PERHAPS THE most important exercise or learning experience ahead of businesses and consumers in Jordan is to differentiate between comparative and competitive advantage, not because theoretical grounding in economics is important for business, but because strategic planning should become the modus operandi in a country that is grappling with issues such as globalisation, restructuring and privatisation. A clear understanding of competitive advantage and a departure from the comparative advantage view are prerequisites for the success of conversion to quality and the value-added mental framework.

Comparative advantage involves the existence of ample raw materials being able to produce something relatively cheaper than another. Competitive advantage requires only that the nation and the firm possess the drive to produce better products than the rest of the world through value added and advanced technologies. In the latter, competitiveness may arise

from the ability to produce a good or a service at a lower cost, and not through cheaper resources and lower wages but through better utilisation of modern technology. At a more abstract level, one could say that a comparative advantage is based on relative advantage(s) in the endowment of economic resources while a competitive advantage is based on the supply and demand conditions in the economy taking into account the full impact of the institutional setting — including civil society, regulatory structures (laws, regulatory commissions and bureaucracy), government policies and strategies (including the stability and modernity of legislation), market structure (monopolistic or competitive) and the existence or lack of supporting and complementary industries. Most importantly, in the competitiveness paradigm, the quality and specialisation of factors is stressed as more significant than the quantity of the factors.

Competitiveness requires that change in the business environ-

ment be conducted at two levels, the nation and the firm. At the national level several decisions must be made to enhance the productivity of factors through schemes to upgrade quality, encourage the formation of geographic industrial groupings of supporting and complementary entities, motivation to specialise through the enhancement of specialised training, and the creation of a stable, modern, business environment attractive to investment. At the company level, businesses must be encouraged to compete and think strategically. Welcoming competition (domestic and foreign) should become engrained in the business psyche while searching for means and methods to become competitive, utilising the most advanced technology to either produce what no one else can produce, or using the best technology to produce something at the lowest cost. Each company in its search for competitiveness must determine what it should not produce, which is a start because



Yugoslavia plays clever with propaganda game

By Robert Fisk

THE YUGOSLAVS know how to play the game. They watched the Iranians hold America's embassy staff hostage. They observed how the Lebanese held U.S. hostages and threatened them with execution. They noted how Saddam Hussein took hostages before the 1991 Gulf War — the Iraqi military were once trained in Yugoslavia — and how the Americans always faltered the moment one of "their boys" was under threat. So the Serbs took three of America's soldiers and announced to the world that they would be "put on trial" — sure enough, on cue, the world's only superpower is putting up the yellow ribbons again. According to the Serbs, "criminal proceedings" are being instituted against James Stone, Andrew Ramirez and Steven Gonzalez by Jovica Jovanovic, a member of the Kosovo Provisional Executive Council, the provincial — and Serb-run — local authority in Pristina. The local Yugoslav 2nd Army Corps claimed that the Americans came from a "reconnaissance detachment" of the U.S. 1st Infantry Division stationed in Germany. For its part, the Yugoslav news agency Tanjug carried a report yesterday from Skopje, the Macedonian capital, stating that inhabitants of the Macedonian village of Male Katarinovac, close to the border, had seen the three soldiers cross into Kosovo. A villager was quoted as saying: "We

heard the Yugoslav border guards warning them to stop — we were surprised to see the Jeep keep on going in the direction of Slavojevac village, on the other side of the border." NATO is claiming that the capture of the soldiers was "good propaganda" for President Milosevic.

But it was nothing of the kind. It was, instead, a masterful way of persuading America to turn the world's attention away from Kosovo's tragedy by demonstrating Washington's real priorities: the preservation of American lives. The Kosovo Albanians, the execution squads, the house-burning and ethnic cleansing, and the alleged detention camps — all went by the board as the world concentrated its attention, not on half a million abused Muslims who speak a strange language, but on three home-town boys who speak English and appeared, bruised but very much alive, on Belgrade television a few hours after their seizure. But is there a trial? Does NATO — or do the American people — really think that the mayor of Pristina is going through the motions of arranging a court appearance: that amid the chaos of Kosovo a military tribunal is going to be formally convened, complete with judge and jury? It seems unlikely, however, dramatically the Serbs report it. As one Belgrade messenger, Radomir Diklic, said yesterday, it is "part of the theatre of the war." But he added — like many other Serbs — that he believed other NATO personnel had been taken prisoner, including pilots, but

that "our military are not releasing all the details because they don't want to raise tensions."

As usual, the capture of the American soldiers — the BBC, Serbs have noted, call it an "abduction" — has played low on the Yugoslav news schedules, following long after national television reports on Serb refugees from Kosovo. NATO bombing that caused three more Serb civilian deaths, and the NATO destruction of the old girder bridge in Novi Sad, which has cut off electricity from much of the town and effectively closed the Danube to traffic. Serbs in Belgrade are now walking the great river bridges in Belgrade each night as "human shields" against further attacks of this kind in the capital. In Yugoslavia, three American soldiers do not take precedence over these events. More important in Belgrade was the appearance of Ibrahim Rugova, the Kosovo Albanian leader, with Milosevic on Thursday night. The government here has now released a copy of a document bearing Rugova's signature — the same signature he appended to last month's Paris-Kosovo peace accord — demanding an end to the air strikes on Serbia. He may very well be an unwilling guest of Milosevic, but he realises now — all too well — that the West will not risk a single soldier's life for the Kosovo Albanians who so solemnly trusted their fate to NATO.

— The Independent

Footnotes

THE RECENT decision by the House of Lords in Britain to change its own previous ruling on the extradition of Chile's former leader Augusto Pinochet to Spain to face a multiple list of charges, is most unfortunate both morally and legally. While the possibility of extradition on a reduced list of charges is still open, the House of Lords in effect reversed itself by dropping a long list of extraditable charges against Pinochet on the controversial legal premise that only offences committed after the International Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment came into effect in 1988 are extraditable offences. All charges pertaining to the mass killing, torture, and extrajudicial execution prior to 1988 — no less than 29 charges — were dropped as non-extraditable offences.

This is indeed regrettable from a legal point of view and the reasons are straightforward. For starters the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is part of at least "soft" international law and the House of Lords meeting in its capacity as an appellate court should have taken into consideration. Article 5 of the declaration states that "no one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment."

This is not all. The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) which came into force on March 23, 1976, also stipulates in its Article 7 that "no one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment." Even more relevant in the case of Pinochet is Article 6 which states that "every human being has the inherent right to life. This right shall be protected by law. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his life." ICCPR is considered part of conventional international law in view of its widespread ratification by the greater majority of states including the U.K., Spain and Chile. Why the House of Lords failed to take into account the ICCPR as a legal yardstick in its deliberations is puzzling to say the least.

And there is more. The International Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide which came into force on January 12, 1951 is equally relevant and should have also been taken into consideration by the House of Lords. There can be no doubt that part of Pinochet's campaign of terror against his people involved genocide. Article 2 of this convention defines genocide as "killing members of the group, causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group, deliberately inflicting on the group condi-

Waleed M. Sadi

tions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part, and forcibly transferring children of the group to another group." Pinochet is charged with all these and they are all extraditable offences under this convention. What were the learned members of the House of Lords thinking of when they failed to take note of this convention which states in Article 1 that "genocide whether committed in time of war or in peace is a crime under international law."

I fail then to comprehend how and why the peers in the House of Lords who ruled on the Pinochet case have reached a legal conclusion which is so overtly against international law. Why in the world did the House of Lords consider their judgement in the light of only one convention rather than in the contexts of others that are even more relevant. I respectfully suggest that the Lords in question did not examine the issues fully and therefore erred in their recent judgement.

Too bad there's no way to appeal against the House of Lords decision. What adds insult to injury is that the House of Lords decision has set a bad precedent for the application of international law whether conventional or otherwise on serious international crimes.

Legal Notes

Water dispute with Israel

By Pascal B. Karmy

MEIR BIN MEIR, the Israeli official responsible for water in Israel, stated a few weeks ago that owing to the drought in Israel the latter will not be able to supply Jordan with 50 mcm of water as stipulated in the Jordan-Israel peace treaty of 1994. Let us consider shortly the legal position on this matter that is to say whether Israel may be justified this summer not to supply all the said amount of water to Jordan or only a reduced part of it.

Article 6 of the Jordan-Israel peace treaty (herein after referred to "The Treaty") provides as follows:

With the view to achieving a comprehensive and lasting settlement of all the water problems between them:

1 — The parties agree mutually to recognise the rightful allocations of both of them in Jordan River, Yarmouk River waters and Araba/Arava groundwater in accordance with the agreed acceptable principles, quantities and quality as set out in Annex II, which shall be fully respected and complied with. Paragraph 5 of this Article provides that: "The implementation of both countries' undertakings under this Article is detailed in Annex II."

Annex II Titled "Water-Related Matters" provides in its paragraph titled "Additional Water" that "Jordan and Israel shall cooperate in finding sources for the supply to Jordan of an additional quantity of 50 mcm/yr of water to drinkable standards. To this end, the joint water committee will develop, within one year from the entry into force of the treaty, a plan for the supply to Jordan of the above-mentioned additional water. This plan will be forwarded to the respective governments for discussion and decision."

Paragraph 4(A) titled "Operation and Maintenance" of Article I of Annex II provides that "Operation and Maintenance of the systems on Israeli territory that supply Jordan with water, and their electricity supply, shall be Israel's responsibility. The operation and maintenance of the new systems that serve only Jordan will be contracted at Jordan's expense to authorities or companies selected by Jordan."

The Jordan-Israel peace treaty is an international one and is governed by international law, as indeed Article Two titled "General principles of the Treaty" provides that: "The parties will apply between them the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations and the principles of international law gov-

erning relations among states in times of peace. The treaty was moreover duly registered with the Secretariat of the United Nations in accordance with Article 102 of the United Nations Charter and as required by Article 30 of the treaty."

This treaty falls under the Vienna Convention of treaties of 1969. Article 26 of this convention provides that: "Every treaty in force is binding upon the parties to it and must be performed by them in good faith." There is much authority in the jurisprudence of the international tribunals for the proposition that the principle of good faith is a legal principle which forms an integral part of the rule "Pacta sunt servanda" that agreements are to be kept by the parties in good faith. International law recognises this rule which applies to specific engagements of states towards other states or the nationals of other states. Moreover Article 25 titled "Rights and Obligations" of the treaty provides in its paragraph 2 that: "The parties undertake to fulfil in good faith their obligations under the treaty, without regard to action or inaction of any other party and independently of any instrument inconsistent with this treaty..."

The Jewish state cannot invoke the application of Article 29 of the treaty dealing with settlement of disputes either by negotiations or arbitration, as this article refers to disputes arising out of the application or interpretation of this treaty. It is submitted that there is no dispute here either as to application or to the interpretation of the treaty.

It can be concluded from all the above that Israel cannot legally fail to fulfil its obligations under the treaty. The supply of 50 mcm by Israel to Jordan is an obligation which should be honoured in all circumstances. This obligation is parallel to and in consideration of the division of waters between the parties. There are here reciprocal concessions from both parties as to the division of water as can clearly be seen in the Annex II on Water-Related Matters. This supply of 50 mcm to Jordan cannot be considered or taken alone by itself as it corresponds and is related to other obligations and concessions undertaken by Jordan in the treaty. Consequently, Israel cannot release itself from the obligation to supply Jordan with the 50 mcm at any time or under any circumstances.

The writer was an advocate in Palestine in 1944 and, for many years, legal officer at UNRWA headquarters in Beirut and Vienna

Bawwab el-Ghazal excavation uncovers prehistoric hunting and herding site at Azraq Oasis

HOW DID Stone Age hunters, gatherers, and settled villagers adapt to life on the marginal desert fringes of Jordan, or exploit the rich bounty of the desert oases at Azraq and Jafr? Answers to these and other intriguing questions are emerging from new work on Neolithic era settlements (c. 8500-4500 BC) at the Azraq Oasis — adding considerably to the knowledge gleaned from throughout Jordan during the past two decades about life and culture in this pivotal historical era. During the Neolithic Revolution, as it is called, human beings slowly made the transition from Stone Age nomadic hunter-gatherers to permanently settled villagers, cultivators, and herders — setting the stage for village and town life, specialisation in human activities, and, eventually, urbanism as we know it today. Some of the largest and best preserved Neolithic villages in the Middle East have been discovered and excavated in Jordan, including 'Ain Ghazal, Basta, Ba'ja, and esh-Shallaf.

The latest Neolithic site to be investigated in Jordan — Bawwab el-Ghazal — is also one of the most fascinating, because of its location at the Azraq Oasis. The site and the settlement responded to many human needs, due to the easy availability there of freshwater, grasslands, agricultural possibilities, wild animals, and stone and other raw materials for making tools, beads, and living structures. In fact, the excavators of Bawwab el-Ghazal call it a "prehistoric site complex," due to its multiple dimensions and functions.

The name Bawwab el-Ghazal means "doorway (or gateway) of the gazelle," it probably reflects the passage there of wild gazelle herds heading to or from Azraq's ancient freshwater lake. The prehistoric site was first identified in 1997 inside the Azraq Wetland Reserve, thanks to cooperation from the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature, which manages the reserve. The ancient remains comprise a small mound, or "mini tell," in the midst of active silt dunes near an ancient marsh or swamp that once formed part of the now-dry Azraq Lake. Traces of wetland vegetation from ancient periods indicate that this was once a marsh environment in antiquity. The closest springs and pools in the area today, other than the main site of Azraq, are at 'Ain Soda and 'Ain Qasiyeh, some three kilometres to the west.

The Bawwab el-Ghazal project team is headed by Philip Wilke and Leslie Quiotero, from the University of California at Riverside (U.S.), and

Gary O. Rollefson, from the 'Ain Ghazal Research Institute (Germany), who is spending this year as a visiting professor at Whitman College (Walla Walla, Washington, U.S.). The work, carried out in cooperation with the Jordanian Department of Antiquities, is part of a wider assessment throughout Jordan of how early pastoralist communities in the Neolithic period adapted to life on the desert margin. Other related projects are taking place in the eastern desert region and at the Jafr Basin in south-east Jordan.

Initial observations of the site in 1997 noted extensive surface deposits of Late Pre-Pottery Neolithic B artefacts, including an impressive number of projectile points and stone beads. One subsurface probe from previous geological coring revealed a midden deposit nearly a meter deep that contained numerous animal bones; these included bones of (probable) domestic goat or sheep, and stone tool artefacts. Some stone alignments were noted on the surface of the site. Mapping in August 1998 showed Bawwab el-Ghazal to measure some 1.25 hectares in size.

Surface examination suggested that its cultural materials dated from the Epipaleolithic and Middle Pre-Pottery Neolithic B (PPNB) periods, and perhaps also from the Early PPNB and the Pottery Neolithic eras (spanning a period of over ten thousand years, from around 16000 to 4500 BC). A systematic collection of stone artefacts on the surface produced over 2,000 chipped stone tools and cores, and more than 300 beads. The beads were made of green "Dabba marble," a red stone, white limestone (?), bone, and shell. Over half the stone tools were bifacially worked knives, "which may reflect a heavy dominance of butchering and hide processing at the site," Rollefson said in a recent interview. Arrowheads, spearheads, and other projectile points accounted for 17 per cent of the tools; this is more than twice the percentage of points found at some of the large permanent settlements (such as 'Ain Ghazal, in north-east Amman, alongside the highway to Zarqa). Burins and drills were heavily represented in the remainder of stone tool types collected on the surface.

Excavation results

The first excavations in August 1998 showed the earliest identified structures to be those of a small campsite from the Natufian period (c. 12000-8000 BC), located adjacent to a disturbed hearth feature. The dig revealed several

hearth-like features and tools associated with animal remains.

On the evidence of some 40 lunates, many with Helwan retouch, the camp seems to have been used in the Early Natufian period, around 12000-11500 BC. Some other Epipaleolithic areas were identified near the western margins of the site, and will be excavated in future seasons.

The excavation of the main Neolithic era mound hit bedrock one metre below the ground surface. The ancient remains included heavily burned debris that seems to have been a dump from the repeated cleaning out of adjacent fireplaces; it included many animal and bird bones, sintered flint tools, burned calcareous stones, basalt pieces, and occasional beads. The bones are being analysed to determine the age of the birds, the percentage of juvenile mammals (especially gazelle), and whether there were any migratory species.

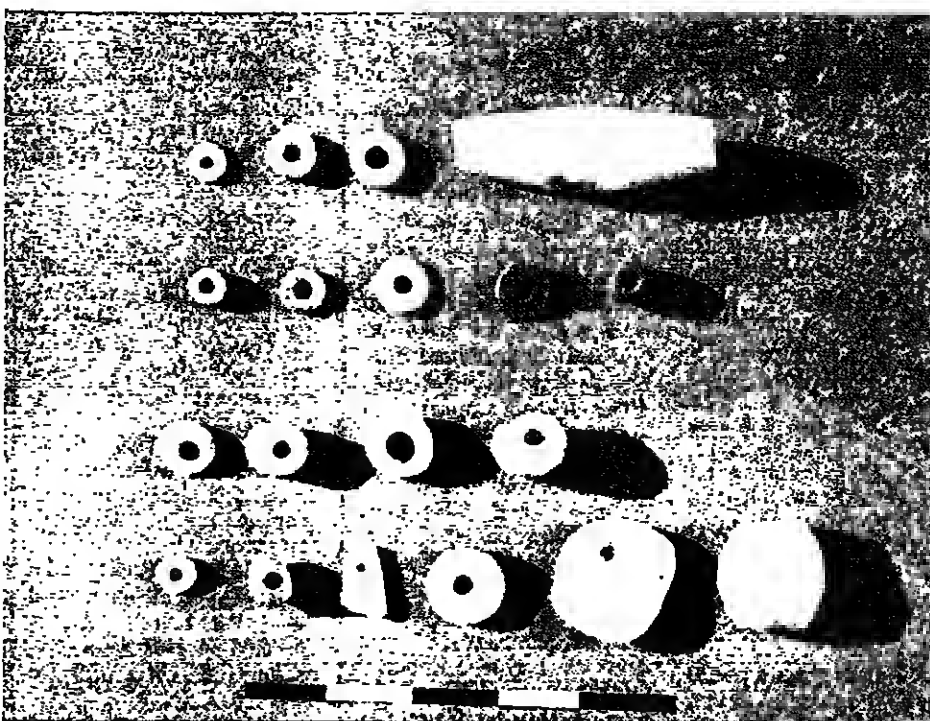
These data can help to clarify if the Stone Age people used this site seasonally or throughout the year, and whether they relied more on hunting or herding.

Rollefson said that a goat horn core associated with a late MPPNB/early LPPNB Byblos arrowhead (c. 6700 - 6400 BC) "adds considerable weight to the probability that the visitors to Bawwab el-Ghazal at that time were pastoralists who hunted extensively to support themselves."

A bead industry

The lower (earlier) part of the site revealed an intact hearth feature, and evidence of bead-making operations, such as many flint bead drills, stone bead blanks, and finished stone beads. More than 200 beads and pendants were retrieved from the Middle and Late PPNB deposits, probably indicating that the people who visited Bawwab el-Ghazal for certain parts of the year used their time there to make beads.

The evidence for this hypothesis, other than the plentiful beads themselves, Rollefson said, includes several factors: many beads were broken during the manufacturing process; some bead blanks in various stages of shaping before drilling began had been abandoned for some reason; the team found many bead drills and drill bits made on burin spalls, while clusters of burins and burin spalls implied the production of spalls to be fashioned into narrow drill bits; many beads were made of gastropod shells available in the adjacent marsh, some of which were shaped and cut for bead production, and much of the bead-production debris at the site con-



Some of the more than 300 beads of red, green, and white stone recovered from Bawwab el-Ghazal (photo courtesy of University of California at Riverside)

sisted of the locally quarried soft, green "Dabba marble."

As happened at most of the other Neolithic settlements excavated in Jordan, the people of

Bawwab el-Ghazal traded raw materials and finished products with people from other parts of the ancient Middle East — among the world's earliest known examples of long-distance

contacts or perhaps even commercial trade. From the Mediterranean to the west or the Red Sea to the south came beads made of mother-of-pearl, a fragment of a large clam shell,

and several cowry shells.

Anatolia in the north must have been the source of nearly 20 fragments of obsidian blades, since no other obsidian sources are known in the area. The blades may have reached Bawwab el-Ghazal in their finished form, for there is no evidence for the production of obsidian blades at the site itself.

The surface of Bawwab el-Ghazal is also characterised by numerous stone alignments, usually sited perpendicular to the prevailing winds. These were probably foundations for temporary shelters, with locally available stones anchoring huts or wind-breaks made of reeds and branches, Rollefson said.

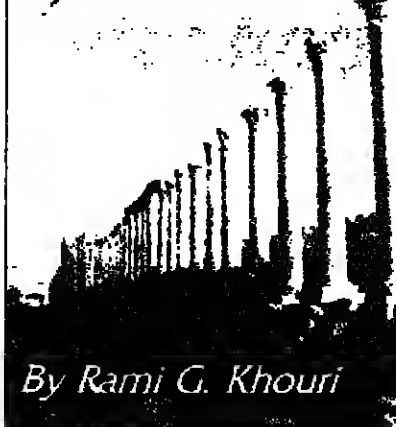
Some of these stone alignments were excavated to reveal low walls surrounding numerous superimposed surfaces, or "floors." The floors were covered with abandoned lithic artefacts, rocky rubble, and animal remains. Judging from the num-

ber of stone alignments, Rollefson said, "multiple-family pastoral and/or hunting units may have used Bawwab el-Ghazal at the same time."

The apparent presence of sheep/goat horn cores in these structures, he said, indicates that the inhabitants maintained herds of domesticated sheep and probably goats during the Late PPNB period (c. 6500 - 6000 BC).

Rollefson said that future fieldwork at Bawwab el-Ghazal will seek to clarify the relationship between the early pastoralist people using this resource and the permanent populations living at the major farming settlements in highland regions such as 'Ain Ghazal.

Our Ancient Heritage
A Jordan Times Series

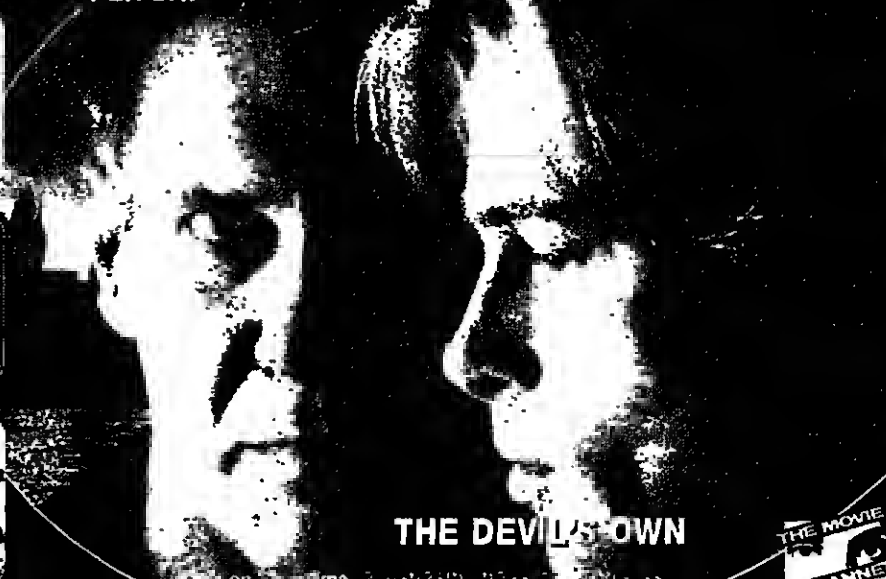
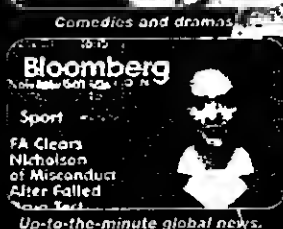


By Rami G. Khouri

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American and Jordanian university students excavate a stone alignment at Neolithic Bawwab el-Ghazal (photo courtesy of University of California at Riverside)

Mubarak embarks on Asian tour to consolidate economic ties

CAIRO (AFP) — Trade relations between Egypt and Asia are expected to head the agenda as Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak left Cairo on Sunday for a high-profile visit to China, South Korea and Japan.

"This is a very important event in Egyptian diplomacy and it will be followed by other tours in Asia to develop relations," said Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Musa, who is accompanying Mubarak on the trip.

The three-nation tour will be the first of a series of visits that in the future are expected to include India and Pakistan, he said.

Trade between Egypt and the powerful tria currently stands at \$5 billion according to the latest available figures and heavily favours Asia, said Abdel Moneim Seidi, president of the Egyptian Federation of Industries.

Egypt exported \$500 million worth of goods to the trio, primarily textiles, while importing \$4.5 billion worth of goods including cars and electrical

appliances, he told the Egyptian news agency MENA.

"During this visit we will focus on finding a balance between our imports and exports, strengthen business relations and help create new joint ventures," Seidi said.

The head of the Sixth of October industrial zone south of Cairo, Hani Srur, said the business delegation accompanying Mubarak hoped to clinch deals worth \$400 million in the fields of textiles, cement and medicine.

Mubarak will be in Beijing from April 5 to 9 for talks with Chinese President Jiang Zemin on the Middle East peace process, international and bilateral issues and the South East Asian financial crisis.

"China is a great country and has a key role to play not only in Asia but also in Africa and other parts of the world to the light of its permanent membership in the (U.N.) Security Council," Musa said.

"Egypt believes that China has a positive role to play in shaping up and

developing the new world order," Musa said, adding that Cairo was the first Arab and African capital to establish ties with China.

Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Sun Yuxi on Thursday described the Mubarak visit — his first since April 1994 — as "very important."

"The two presidents will have an exchange of views on the further development of friendly relations and mutually beneficial cooperation," Sun said.

Mubarak's visit to Korea will be the first since Cairo, which has historically good ties with North Korea, opened diplomatic relations with Seoul in 1995.

The volume of trade between Seoul and Cairo stood at \$590 million in 1997.

Seoul has around \$120 million invested in Egypt, in the oil sector and industrial projects including car manufacturing, and hopes the visit will increase its investments in Egypt, the South Korean embassy in Cairo said.

Late last year South Korea presented Egypt with

a feasibility study to set up a "Silicon Valley-type" region in the northeastern town of Ismailiya on the Suez Canal.

South Korean Prime Minister Kim Jong-Pil visited Cairo in February and discussed with Mubarak a possible Egyptian mediation bid between the two Koreas.

Mubarak also visits Japan April 11-13 for talks on bilateral issues and the Middle East peace process.

The foreign ministry in Tokyo said Mubarak will meet Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi as well as Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko during the visit, which will include a special seminar on bolstering economic ties.

Japan represents 15 per cent of Egypt's imports, and five per cent of its exports, for a total turnover of \$1.06 billion.

Japan is involved in the financing and construction of a \$188 million suspension bridge over the Suez Canal to alleviate the growth of road traffic in the area.

Palestinians combat intellectual property piracy

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (R) — the Palestinian National Authority said Sunday it was cracking down on compact disc and software piracy to try to safeguard intellectual property rights and draw foreign investment.

"We hope our efforts will serve as an example to foreign franchises, business people and international producers that we are serious. When we talk business we mean business," said Maher Al Masri, Palestinian minister of economy and trade.

Masri and a U.S. official and industry representatives agreed last month to target counterfeiters in Palestinian-ruled areas.

A U.S. official, who declined to be identified, said the Palestinian moves appeared to indicate a new readiness to cope with the issue.

"We are very optimistic that this will lessen the amount of piracy in the Palestinian National Authority and henceforth in Israel since there is a lot of cooperation," said Yohanan Banon, of the International Federation of the Phonographic Industry (IFPI).

Banon said pirated products were being produced in Palestinian areas for sale in Israel.

U.S. officials, who are sharply critical of Israel, have also blasted the Palestinian National Authority over copyright infringement and urged the sides to curb the problem together.

The United States has put Israel on its "priority watch" list and given it until the end of April to pass stronger laws and tougher enforcement or face possible trade action within six months.

"The issue of piracy in Palestinian territories is infinitesimal compared with the problem in Israel," Masri said, adding they were somewhat linked.

"We bring in people involved in those activities and tell them point blank to stop — otherwise we will use the law to stop them," he added.

U.S. faults China, EU in latest report on trade barriers

WASHINGTON (AFP) — The United States has described Chinese trade barriers as "pernicious" and warned that "protectionism" in the European Union (EU) threatened to complicate EU-U.S. commercial relations.

The Office of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR), in its annual report on foreign trade barriers, also pledged to exert further pressure on Japan to deregulate its economy and said resistance remained in South Korea to trade reforms.

"China's interlocking and pernicious market access barriers with respect to goods, services and agriculture are a serious concern," according to the USTR.

It cited high tariffs, restrictive licensing regulations and investment practices that make it difficult for exporters to penetrate Chinese wholesale and consumer markets.

Washington is demanding that such restrictions be eliminated or eased if China wants to be admitted to the World Trade Organisation (WTO).

While the United States has been encouraged by Chinese moves to stamp out

software piracy, "additional efforts must be undertaken to address the retooling of pirated intellectual property."

The USTR characterised the U.S. economic relationship with the European Union as "the largest and most complex in the world."

In particular, the report pointed to what it said has been an EU refusal to acknowledge WTO findings that European beef and banana import policies are discriminatory.

Such a stance undermines the credibility of the WTO dispute settlement mechanism and is likely to bedevil EU-U.S. relations in the near future, the USTR maintained.

"The EU's protectionist agriculture policies are likely to continue to cause problems, unless addressed in upcoming multilateral trade negotiations," the report said.

WTO trade ministers are due to meet in Washington state in November ahead of a new multilateral round of trade talks next year.

Elsewhere in the report, the United States complained of government subsidies provided to EU industries, notably aircraft.

While having successfully concluded 35 trade agreements with Japan since 1993, the United States is looking for additional steps by Tokyo that make it easier for foreign suppliers to do business in Japan, according to the USTR.

Washington "will continue to press Japan to implement further concrete deregulation measures" in such sectors as telecommunications, medical devices, housing, financial services and energy.

In South Korea, the USTR complimented President Kim Dae Jung for his commitment to market-oriented measures but found that "resistance to key trade reforms remains."

The report highlighted impediments to the entry of foreign pharmaceuticals and recalled that the United States had taken complaints of South Korean obstacles to beef imports and airport procurement to the WTO.

It also expressed "long-standing concerns about the Korean government's involvement and support for the Korean steel industry" but noted President Kim's willingness to address the question.

The USTR report in addition

mentioned trade barriers in Canada, notably in agriculture and magazine publishing, and Mexico, where the flow of U.S. farm products and telecommunications services has been impeded.

In Tokyo, Japan hit back at an annual U.S. government report which was critical of its trade barriers, dismissing the document as "unilateral and erroneous."

Trade Minister Kaoru Yosano said of the U.S. Trade Representative report: "It is meaningful that individual countries point out their trade partners' problems and seek solutions to them."

"But it (the report) is dotted with unilateral and erroneous descriptions," the minister told a news conference, without giving examples. "In addition it uses small U.S. market shares in the country in question as an index of analyses, which does not always result in analyses in line with international rules."

Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi said he was concerned about the reinstated "Super 301" trade weapon allowing Washington to take retaliatory action against countries deemed unfair trade partners.

"I cannot help expressing concerns about unilateral decision by the United States to reinstate the 301 trade act," Obuchi told reporters.

"I will monitor actions to be taken from now on, but I expect the United States to follow international rules and act prudently and appropriately," the premier said.

In particular Yosano voiced dissatisfaction with U.S. complaints against steel imports from Japan, arguing that Japanese steel exports fell sharply from last autumn.

"It is hard to believe they will surge in the future," he said.

The U.S. administration, responding to warnings from its steelmakers that their future is endangered by a flood of cheap imports, invoked U.S. trade laws to announce "anti-dumping" duties on shipments from Japan and Brazil.

U.S. trade authorities determined that hot-rolled steel imports from Japan, Brazil and Russia had been entering the United States at "dumping" prices, that is, well below cost of production.

Exchange Rates		Sunday, 04-04-99		ACCESS 44-48383	
Currency	Unit	Rate	Rate	Rate	Rate
JORDAN DINAR	1,000	0.1988	0.1987	1.8777	1.8587
BAHRAIN DINAR	1,000	0.1988	0.1987	1.8777	1.8587
IRANIAN RIAL	1,000	0.1988	0.1987	1.8777	1.8587
QATAR RIAL	1,000	0.1988	0.1987	1.8777	1.8587
SAUDI RIAL	1,000	0.1988	0.1987	1.8777	1.8587
YEMEN RIAL	1,000	0.1988	0.1987	1.8777	1.8587
LIBYAN DINAR	1,000	0.1988	0.1987	1.8777	1.8587
EGYPT POUND	1,000	0.1988	0.1987	1.8777	1.8587
ISRAELI SHEQEL	1,000	0.1988	0.1987	1.8777	1.8587
INDONESIAN RUPIAH	1,000	0.1988	0.1987	1.8777	1.8587
THAI BATH	1,000	0.1988	0.1987	1.8777	1.8587
PHILIPPINE PESO	1,000	0.1988	0.1987	1.8777	1.8587
VIETNAMESE DONG	1,000	0.1988	0.1987	1.8777	1.8587
LAOS KIP	1,000	0.1988	0.1987	1.8777	1.8587
MYANMAR KYAT	1,000	0.1988	0.1987	1.8777	1.8587
NEPAL RUPEE	1,000	0.1988	0.1987	1.8777	1.8587
AFGHAN AFGANI	1,000	0.1988	0.1987	1.8777	1.8587
PAKISTANI RUPEE	1,000	0.1988	0.1987	1.8777	1.8587
INDONESIAN RUPIAH	1,000	0.1988	0.1987	1.8777	1.8587
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AFGHAN AFGANI	1,000	0.1988	0.1987	1.8777	1.8587
PAKISTANI RUPEE	1,000	0.1988	0.1987	1.8777	1.8587

Major Currencies Against Jordan Dinar		Sunday, 04-04-99	
Currency	Unit	Rate	Rate
US DOLLAR	1,000	0.1988	0.1987
EURO	1,000	0.1988	0.1987
BRITISH POUND	1,000	0.1988	0.1987
GERMAN MARK	1,000	0.1988	0.1987
FRANCE FRANC	1,000	0.1988	0.1987
ITALY LIRA	1,000	0.1988	0.1987
SPAIN PESA	1,000	0.1988	0.1987
NETHERLAND GUILDER	1,000	0.1988	0.1987
SWITZERLAND FRANC	1,000	0.1988	0.1987
AUSTRIAN SCHILLING	1,000	0.1988	0.1987
PORTUGAL ESCUDO	1,000	0.1988	0.1987
GREEK DRACHMA	1,000	0.1988	0.1987
IRISH POUND	1,000	0.1988	0.1987
FINNISH MARKKA	1,000	0.1988	0.1987
DENMARK KRONER	1,000	0.1988	0.1987
ISRAELI SHEQEL	1,000	0.1988	0.1987
YEMEN RIAL	1,000	0.1988	0.1987
LIBYAN DINAR	1,000	0.1988	0.1987
EGYPT POUND	1,000	0.1988	0.1987
QATAR RIAL	1,000	0.1988	0.1987
BAHRAIN DINAR	1,000	0.1988	0.1987
IRANIAN RIAL	1,000	0.1988	0.1987

World Stock Markets		Sunday, 04-04-99	
Market	Index	Change	Index
NEW YORK	DOW JONES	+10.30	8,000.00
NEW YORK	S&P 500	+0.10	1,000.00
NEW YORK	NASDAQ	+1.00	2,000.00
NEW YORK	NYSE COMPOSITE	+0.10	1,000.00
NEW YORK	AMEX COMPOSITE	+0.10	1,000.00
NEW YORK	NYSE 100	+0.10	1,000.00
NEW YORK	NYSE 200	+0.10	1,000.00
NEW YORK	NYSE 300	+0.10	1,000.00
NEW YORK	NYSE 400	+0.10	1,000.00
NEW YORK	NYSE 500	+0.10	1,000.00
NEW YORK	NYSE 600	+0.10	1,000.00
NEW YORK	NYSE 700	+0.10	1,000.00
NEW YORK	NYSE 800	+0.10	1,000.00
NEW YORK	NYSE 900	+0.10	1,000.00
NEW YORK	NYSE 1000	+0.10	1,000.00
NEW YORK	NYSE 1100	+0.10	1,000.00
NEW YORK	NYSE 1200	+0.10	1,000.00
NEW YORK	NYSE 1300	+0.10	1,000.00
NEW YORK	NYSE 1400	+0.10	1,000.00
NEW YORK	NYSE 1500	+0.10	1,000.00
NEW YORK	NYSE 1600	+0.10	1,000.00
NEW YORK	NYSE 1700	+0.10	1,000.00
NEW YORK	NYSE 1800	+0.10	1,000.00
NEW YORK	NYSE 1900	+0.10	1,000.00
NEW YORK	NYSE 2000	+0.10	1,000.00

Precious Metals		Sunday, 04-04-99	
Market	Index	Change	Index
NEW YORK	GOLD	+0.10	1,000.00
NEW YORK	SILVER	+0.10	1,000.00
NEW YORK	PLATINUM	+0.10	1,000.00
NEW YORK	PALLADIUM	+0.10	1,000.00
NEW YORK	RUDE	+0.10	1,000.00
NEW YORK	COBALT	+0.10	1,000.00
NEW YORK	NI	+0.10	1,000.00
NEW YORK	CU	+0.10	1,000.00
NEW YORK	ZN	+0.10	1,000.00
NEW YORK	AL	+0.10	1,000.00
NEW YORK	FE	+0.10	1,000.00
NEW YORK	CR	+0.10	1,000.00
NEW YORK	NI	+0.10	1,000.00
NEW YORK	CU	+0.10	1,000.00
NEW YORK	ZN	+0.10	1,000.00
NEW YORK	AL	+0.10	1,000.00
NEW YORK	FE	+0.10	1,000.00
NEW YORK	CR	+0.10	1,000.00

THE Daily Crossword Edited by Wayne Robert Williams

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Peanuts

SORRY WE'RE A LITTLE LATE, MAAM. WE WALKED ALL THE WAY TO SCHOOL THIS MORNING.

AGAINST THE WIND.

Andy Capp

WELL, YOU'RE A LITTLE LATE, MAAM. WE WALKED ALL THE WAY TO SCHOOL THIS MORNING.

AGAINST THE WIND.

Mutt'n'Jeff

HELLO, IS THIS JACK?

NO, THIS IS JEFF.

IS THIS 212-768-1111?

NO, THIS IS 212-768-1111.

OH, I MUST HAVE DIALED THE WRONG NUMBER, I'M SORRY.

OH, THAT'S ALL RIGHT. I HAD TO GET UP TO ANSWER THE PHONE ANYWAY.

THE BETTER HALF By Glasbergen

LOSE WEIGHT FAST!

I've tried all the diet pills. The only appetite suppressant that really works is a large sausage pizza!

JUMBLE THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

Unscramble these four jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

CHUGO
TINFE
CILOPY
TOUGUD

Answer here: _____

Yesterday's Jumble: LUTTER MERGE STURDY JOBBER

What he considered the winner's recommendation — A BUM STEER

Australia, Japan send records tumbling in dramatic finale

HONG KONG (AFP) — The medley relay squads of Australia and Japan both set new world records as the World Short Course Championships drew to a dramatic close here Sunday.

Japan's talented women's quartet Mai Nakamura, Masami Tanaka, Ayari Aoyama and Sumika Minamoto stormed to a new world best of 3 minutes 57.62 seconds to strike gold in their final and cap a brilliant championships for the Japanese.

In the final event of the night, Australia's men's 4x100m squad sealed their team's place at the top of the medal table in emphatic fashion with a new world record of 3:29.88, heating the old time of 3:29.66 set in Gothenburg two years ago.

The Australian quartet of Matt Welsh, Philip Rogers, Michael Klim and Christopher Fydlar clinched their country's ninth gold of the championships at the Hong Kong Coliseum, setting the seventh world record of the meet in the process.

"It's a fantastic way to finish the tournament," Welsh said afterwards. "I'd trust these guys with anything," he added.

"But the whole Australian team has done well over the past four days and we're just happy to be part of the squad. The atmosphere has been tremendous," he said.

"We weren't thinking about the record at the start of the meet. But when the squad came together we knew we would have a chance to go close," Klim said.

American Olympic gold



Canada's Przemyslaw Pietucha swims the butterfly leg in a men's 4x100-metre medley relay heat of the 4th World Short-Course Swimming Championships in Hong Kong April 4. Canada won in a time of three minutes 35.69 seconds (AFP photo)

medallist Jenny Thompson took three gold medals at the championships, winning the 100m butterfly final to end her campaign on a winning note.

But the 26-year-old was disappointed not to add to her world record tally. "I was very tired because I've had a very active meet here. But one world record and three golds is not too bad I suppose. I wanted to go for the world record in the final tonight but I just couldn't find the energy, which was a bit disappointing," Thompson said.

While Britain's Mark Foster was a strong winner in the men's 50m butterfly, picking up his second gold of the championships.

Although Australia were the dominant force throughout the championships, they were forced to take a bow to the remarkable Japanese

squad, whose women have now blasted their way into the world class bracket.

Japan won three more golds, with the world record in the relay providing the icing on the cake. "This world record is for everybody in the stadium," said Nakamura, who had earlier won her second gold of the competition with a victory in the women's 200m backstroke.

But it was Asian Games gold medallist Tanaka who was the star for Japan during the competition, bagging four golds. Japan's total of six golds helped them to second spot behind the Australians in the final medal table.

Tanaka had put in a blistering breaststroke leg in Japan's world record effort, and earlier in the evening completed a cleansweep in the breaststroke events when she beat Olympic champion Penny Heyns into second place in the 100m final.

"It's been amazing. Just amazing — I couldn't have dreamed anything better to win four gold medals and set two world records," Tanaka said.

"We have showed that Japan has talented swimmers and we are capable of competing at this level,"

Tanaka said.

Vying for Tanaka as the outstanding female individual swimmer were the Slovak Republic's Martina Moravcova, who finished with three golds after taking the 200m medley and freestyle titles.

"I was a bit tired but I could see a few of my fans in the stands and that gave me a lift in both of the finals," Moravcova said. "Before these championships I had hoped to win one gold medal so to win three is more than I could have asked for," she said.

Another swimmer left feeling weary after an eventful championships was Australian Grant Hackett. Hackett, who set a world record in the 400m freestyle on Friday, was unable to repeat his feat in the 1,500m final.

Hackett finished in a time of 14:32.87, comfortably ahead of second placed Graeme Smith of Britain — who clocked 14:45.41, but well outside his world best of 14:19.55.

"I'd hoped to attack the record but the truth is that I was feeling sore throughout the race. I was hurting for a lot of it but I don't want to make excuses," he said. "I just feel I didn't swim a very good race."

'Reform needed to keep Sydney sponsors'

SYDNEY (AFP) — Olympic sponsors may pull out of the Sydney 2000 Games if the International Olympic Committee does not reform itself, an IOC consultant admitted Sunday.

"If the Olympic movement is unable to make the kind of reforms which it needs to do, then sponsors will be moving back," Simon Longstaff, retained by the IOC to establish an ethics commission, told Channel Nine television.

"They'll be looking for change and I think they can reasonably expect the IOC to say 'this is what we're going to do to make it quite transparent' and for them, that is the corporate sponsors, to be able to assess whether those changes are having practical effect."

Six members of the IOC were expelled for accepting bribes, gifts and other inducements during Salt Lake City's effort to win the 2002 Winter Games.

Nine members received warnings and four others resigned.

Sydney is about A\$200 million (\$120 million) short of its target for Olympic sponsorship.

A report into Sydney's bid, published last month, revealed a series of breaches of Olympic guidelines.

But Longstaff said it could not be likened to bribery.

"This is not corruption in the Australian sense as far as I can see, which normally happens behind closed doors. It's deals done in the dark, that seemed to have happened in Salt Lake City," he said.

"In Australia there were letters written, it was done in letter-head, it was all signed, it was put in files and then it was released to the media.

"This is something else, it's about people I think not quite realising the way in which their actions were going to be judged and perhaps getting used to a pattern of behaviour which had almost become kind of unthinking customer practice."



Alex O'Brien (L) and USA teammate Todd Martin talk to each other during their Davis Cup doubles match against British pair Tim Henman and Greg Rusedski in Birmingham. The Britons won the match (AFP photo)

France, Brazil advance in Davis Cup

NIMES (AFP) — France's Cedric Pioline secured a memorable Davis Cup tie victory over former Wimbledon champion Richard Krajicek, to give his country a winning 3-1 lead over Holland in the Davis Cup World Group first round match here on Sunday.

Pioline played brilliantly on the pressure points, wrapping up a 6-3, 3-6, 7-5, 7-6 (7/5).

France captain Guy Forget, a Davis Cup winner as a player, motivated Pioline throughout during the breaks as the former Wimbledon runner-up kept his energy up by munching bananas.

A partisan crowd gave Pioline a rousing reception, silencing the small but vociferous orange-clad Dutch section of the crowd. Krajicek had won the opening singles against Jerome Golmard on Friday with Pioline levelling the match against Paul Haarhuis.

But France took the lead with Pioline and Guillaume Raoux winning the doubles against Jan Siemerink and Haarhuis.

Golmard and Haarhuis were to clash later in the final singles match, rendered meaningless by Pioline's heroics.

France will be on home ground again when they take on Spain, who beat Brazil, in the quarter-finals from July 16-18.

Kuerten wraps up win for Brazil

In Llerida, former French Open champion Gustavo Kuerten wrapped up a Davis Cup World Group first round win over Spain here Sunday, beating Carlos Moya 6-2, 6-4, 6-1 to give the Brazilians a decisive 3-1 lead.

Kuerten had set the ball rolling Friday by beating Alex Corretja in straight sets and then teamed up with Jaime Oncins to beat Corretja and Albert Costa in

a five-set doubles battle. World No. 2 Moya had given the Spaniards a ray of hope by winning his opening singles rubber Friday against Fernando Meligeni in four sets.

Kuerten, currently ranked 18 on the ATP computer, was as good as his word having asserted before the match that he was feeling happier with life than ever.

That was plainly evident as he brushed Moya aside in 100 minutes having picked up the opening set in just half an hour after breaking Moya in the fourth game. Afterwards the disappointing Spaniard just wilted.

Moya rallied briefly in the second set but again Kuerten ground him down after breaking in the ninth game.

In the third and final set, Kuerten doggedly forced Moya on to his weaker backhand to wrap up the match and the tie against opponents who were semi-finalists a year ago.

"Kuerten was just unbeatable on the clay today," admitted a disconsolate Moya, himself a clay specialist.

The Spaniard has a poor record against Kuerten with just one win in five meetings.

Kuerten said he had made up his mind to play an "intelligent tennis" while conserving my energy. "I felt inspired today," he said. "If I can keep this up I think I can improve my ranking. I'm playing better with every game," added the Brazilian, who flirted with the top ten in late 1997, the year of his French Open victory.

Spain now must face World Group relegation playoffs in September.

Corretja and Meligeni were to play the final academic reverse singles later Sunday afternoon.

Slovaks eliminate Sweden

Slovakia on Sunday dumped holders Sweden

out of the Davis Cup. Karol Kucera's 1-6, 6-3, 6-2, 6-4 win over Thomas Enqvist giving the Slovaks an unsailable 3-1 lead in their world group first round match.

Slovakia had made the perfect start on Friday by taking both singles matches with Kucera and Dominik Hrbaty recording victories over Thomas Johansson and Swedish No. 1 Enqvist respectively.

The Swedes fought back to win Saturday's doubles rubber, which Nicklas Kulti and Jonas Bjorkman took against Kucera and Hrbaty 4-6, 7-6 (7/2), 6-7 (6/8), 6-1, 6-3.

Slovakia's win was sweet revenge for 12 months ago, when they let the Swedes off the hook, going down 3-2 in Bratislava having led 2-0.

Hrbaty was to play Johansson in the final reverse singles.

Ferreira gives S. Africa victory

It took Wayne Ferreira two hours and 46 minutes of intense tennis to give South Africa its first Davis Cup win in two years on Sunday.

The World No. 30 came back from two sets to one down to quell Belorussian Vladimir Voltchkov 6-0, 4-6, 3-6, 6-2, 6-4 in their Euro-Africa Zone Group 1 tie at the Rondebosch courts here.

With South Africa already 2-1 up against Belarus going into Sunday, Ferreira's victory put the country into a promotion-relegation tie for a berth in the World Group from September 24 to 26. The draw for that tie will be made in London on Thursday.

With the contest decided, David Nankin played a dead rubber against junior Sergei Samosejko Sunday afternoon, which he won 6-2, 6-2 to give South Africa a 4-1 victory in the tie.

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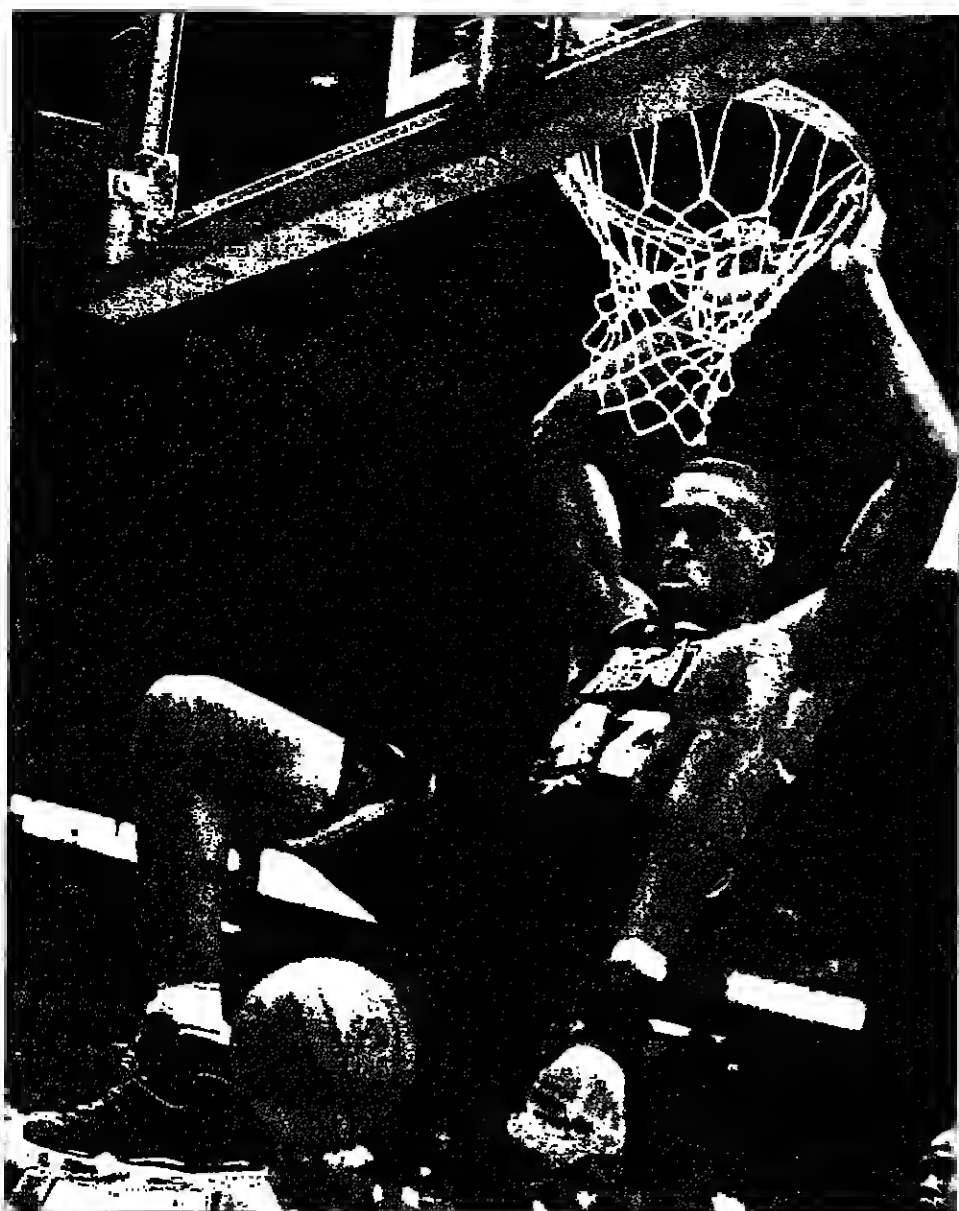
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Miami Heat forward P.J. Brown hangs on the rim as he dunks for two points in the first quarter at Continental Airlines Arena in East Rutherford, NJ (AFP photo)

Gill's 11 steals help Nets beat Heat; Spurs win again

EAST RUTHERFORD, New Jersey (R) — Kendall Gill tied an NBA record with 11 steals and recorded his first triple-double in more than three years as the New Jersey Nets posted an 88-77 victory over the slumping Miami Heat on Saturday.

Gill tied the league mark set by Larry Kenon of the San Antonio Spurs in 1976. He added 15 points and 10 rebounds.

"I knew I put in a big defensive effort, but I didn't know about the record," Gill said. "This just shows the commitment we've made to defence." Keith Van Horn had 27 points and 10 rebounds and Stephen Marbury added 21 for New Jersey, which has won consecutive games for the first time this season and improved to 4-7 under interim coach Don Casey.

Playing without injured centre Jayson Williams (broken leg), the Nets overcame a 24-16 first-quarter deficit by holding Miami to just 14 points in the second and third quarters.

"When you lose a player like Jayson Williams, who's essentially the heart and soul of this team, to come out and get a win against one of the best teams in the NBA, it's obviously a great feeling of satisfaction," Van Horn said.

"We could not shoot the ball today," Miami coach Pat Riley said.

The Heat have lost four in a row for the first time since April 1996 and fell 2 1/2 games behind first-place Orlando in the Atlantic Division.

In Toronto, Kevin Willis's follow shot with 18 seconds left and rookie Vince Carter's defence on Mitch Richmond in the final minute helped the Raptors pull out an 87-85 victory over the Washington Wizards.

After a three-pointer by Richmond, Doug Christie missed a short baseline jumper for the Raptors, but Willis grabbed his 11th rebound of the game and put up a floater that fell through to put Toronto back on top.

"I watched the flight of the ball and I positioned myself to get the ball and put the ball back up," Willis said. "I was in the right place at the right time." The Wizards again put the ball in the hands of Richmond, who scored 16 of his 28 points in the fourth quarter. Unable to drive past Carter, Richmond lofted a shot from the right wing that missed the rim with 10 seconds left.

At Detroit, Penny Hardaway scored a season-high 30 points and Darrell Armstrong added 16, including five straight during a 20-3 third-quarter run that lifted the Orlando Magic to a 92-77 victory over the Pistons.

Magic coach Chuck Daly took part in pregame ceremonies honouring the Pistons' championship teams of 1989-90. Daly coached Detroit to back-to-back titles.

At Los Angeles, Donyell Marshall scored 14 points and the Warriors led virtually from start to finish en route to a surprising 81-76 victory over the mistake-prone Lakers.

Bimbo coles added 13 points for Golden State, which led by as many as 17 points in the third quarter before holding on for its first road win over the Lakers since April 12, 1994.

Dennis Rodman picked up his first ejection in a Laker uniform, collecting a pair of technical fouls with 2:04 remaining. He committed a hard foul on John Starks to pick up the first technical and was ejected when he continued to question the call.

In Minneapolis, Kevin Garnett scored 24 points and grabbed 10 rebounds to lead the Timberwolves to their third straight win, 105-96 over the Sacramento Kings.

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Hasanein scandal rocks bodybuilding

Jordan awaits IFBB confirmation to ban champion

By Tareq Ayyoub

AMMAN — Officials heading the sport of bodybuilding in the Kingdom are expecting a tumultuous week ahead after recent reports that Jordan's champion Mustafa Hasanein tested positive and was disqualified from a championship that was held in Turkey last year.

The scandal rocked the sport after the media obtained official figures from the International Body-Building Federation (IFBB) which indicated that Hasanein was not among the medal winners at the 1998 IFBB Men's World Amateur Body-Building Championships in Izmir last November.

The controversy, which was first reported by a local Arabic daily this week, noted that despite six months since the championship was held in Turkey, Jordan's Body-Building Federation (JBFF) seems to have been the last to know about this result.

Official results obtained from the IFBB made no mention of Hasanein, as first place went to the Russian bodybuilder Serguei Chelestov while the silver medal was won by Ukrainian Oleg Protas.

The IFBB results noted that the final placements differ from those originally posted and reflect results of the doping control tests conducted on medalists after



Mustafa Hasanein

the finals. The results made no indication to Hasanein who then claimed that he was

crowned as the above 95 weight champion. Following his arrival to Jordan in November,

Hasanein received a hero's welcome and met with sport officials headed by then Minister of Youth and Culture Talal Sata'an Al Hassan and JBFF President Abdul Mun'em Abu Touk.

Abu Touk told the Jordan Times that the federation has received nothing from the IFBB indicating that Hasanein was disqualified.

"We have contacted the IFBB in the past two days to inquire about the matter and until this moment we have not received any information that Hasanein was disqualified," Abu Touk said.

He said the Jordanian federation has a video tape of the time when Hasanein was crowned champion of the above 95 weight category.

"Usually blood samples of those won the first three places are taken for doping tests which need two months to be analysed," he added.

"We do not know if the IFBB has sent us the results. But I can assure everybody that the JBFF has not received the results of the test and we do not know why it has not reached us so far," Abu Touk said.

He indicated that he will contact IFBB President Ben Weider for more details about the disqualification of the Jordanian champion.

Abu Touk said that he phoned Hasanein yesterday and the latter denied using performance enhancing drugs during the championship.

Hasanein will not be allowed to take part in any domestic or international contests if the IFBB proves that he used banned substances.

Hasanein, who resides in Austria, was favoured to clinch the gold medal for Jordan in the upcoming Pan-Arab Games.

Jordan's best achievement in bodybuilding was Hasanein's third place finish in 1994 World Championship held in China.

Last year, Jordan's weightlifting champion Ayed Khawaldeh was disqualified from the Asian Games contests which were held in Bangkok in December after testing positive.

Khawaldeh tested positive after setting a new Arab record in the 56-kilogramme class. The Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) reprimanded the Jordan Olympic Committee after Khawaldeh was found to have taken the diuretic Triamterene in a random test following which he was immediately disqualified and expelled from the Games Village.

The OCA handed the matter to the sport's governing body to impose an international suspension which will bar him from the Pan-Arab Games.

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Belgian League: St. Truiden 4, Ostend 0, Beveren 1, Charleroi 2, Mouscron 3, Kortrijk 1, Westerlo 1, Genk 1, Harelbeke 5, Aalst 0, Lommel 0, Lierse 0, FC Brugge 1, Gent 0, G. Ekeren 0, Standard Liege 1, Anderlecht 1, Lokeren 1

Dutch League: PSV Eindhoven 3, Ajax 1, NAC Breda 2, Willem II Tilburg 2, RKC Waalwijk 0, Vitesse Arnhem 2

German League: Schalke 04 2, VfL Wolfsburg 0, 1860 Munich 1, Nuremberg 2, Hamburg SV 2, SC Freiburg 1, Werder Bremen 0, Hansa Rostock 3, B. Dortmund 2, Bayern Munich 2, VfB Stuttgart 0, MSV Duisburg 0, Kaiserslautern 0, B. Leverkusen 1

Italian League: Bari 1, AS Roma 4, Empoli 1, Juventus 0, Lazio 0, AC Milan 0, Parma 1, Cagliari 1, Perugia 0, Bologna 0, Piacenza 4, Udinese 3, Vicenza 1, Sampdoria 0, Inter Milan 2, Fiorentina 0

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Hingis, Kournikova reach final

HILTON HEAD, South Carolina (AFP) — For the second Sunday in a row, two teenagers will be battling for a WTA Tour singles title, but neither won "is" named Williams.

Top seed Martina Hingis of Switzerland advanced to her fourth final of the year Saturday by whipping third seed and current doubles partner Jana Novotna of the Czech Republic 6-2, 6-3 at the \$1.05 million Family Circle Cup.

Seventh seed Anna Kournikova of Russia, who teamed with Hingis earlier this year to win the Australian Open doubles title, reached her second career singles final by getting past sixth seed Patty Schnyder of Switzerland 6-7 (5/7), 6-0, 6-3.

The 18-year-old Hingis,

who improved to 9-3 lifetime against the reigning Wimbledon champion, has not won a title since February 7 at the Pan-Pacific Open in Tokyo.

A week before that, Hingis captured her third consecutive Australian Open crown.

She also reached the final of the Sydney International in Australia the second week of January but lost to American Lindsay Davenport.

A winner here in 1997, Hingis will be gunning for her 22nd career WTA Tour title.

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Syria slams U.S. sanctions on arms firms, Assad to visit Russia

DAMASCUS (R) — Syria on Sunday condemned U.S. sanctions against three Russian firms for supplying anti-tank weapons to Damascus as President Hafez Assad prepared to visit Moscow to boost bilateral ties, officials and diplomats said.

Diplomats said Assad would visit Moscow on April 13 for talks with Russian leaders on ways of promoting cooperation in all fields in addition to the stalled Syrian-Israeli peace negotiations.

"The talks are expected to cover military as well as economic and political cooperation between Syria and Russia," one diplomat said. A trip to Moscow by Assad

had been planned for a long time but the April date was fixed recently, diplomats said. The official Syrian daily Al Baath, organ of the ruling Baath party, described the sanctions as a result of a campaign by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's Likud Party against Syria prior to the Israeli general elections in May.

It said the U.S. action was also part of what it called Washington's attempts to promote its role as the sole axis in the world.

"In addition to its full support for Israel it is clear that the U.S. is trying to promote its role as the sole axis in this world," Al Baath said.

"This was clear in Washington's retraction from its pledge to play the role of an honest broker in the Middle East peace process and its unilateral decisions to launch military strikes [against Iraq and Yugoslavia] away from the U.N. Security Council," the paper said.

"According to the American and Israeli concept, Israel could continue to possess and develop all types of arms including weapons of mass destruction not to defend itself but to attack others including Syria," Al Baath said.

Syria has held sporadic peace talks with Israel since 1991 but the negotiations broke off in early 1996 without making tan-

gible progress on the fate of the Golan Heights, occupied by Israel in 1967, and future ties.

Russia, which has condemned the U.S. sanctions, said on Sunday that Washington's action would further sour bilateral relations with Damascus.

A statement by Russia's foreign ministry bitterly blamed Washington for what it described as an attempt to replace international law with its own legislation.

The U.S. sanctions, announced on Friday, will affect the Tula Design Bureau, the Volsky Mechanical Plant and the Tzintochmash Company which were accused of supplying weapons to Syria.

Christians, Muslims clash in Nazareth

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (R) — Tensions between Muslims and Christians in the town of Nazareth erupted into riots on Easter Sunday in which at least 27 people were hurt, Israeli police said.

Authorities briefly closed the main road in the town where the scriptures say Jesus lived. Police battled to break up clashes over a disputed tract near the Basilica of the Annunciation, the holiest Christian site in the Arab city.

Police spokeswoman Linda Menuhin said 27 people and several policemen were hurt and one rioter was arrested.

The head of the Roman Catholic church in the Holy Land, Latin Patriarch Michel Sabbah, appealed in an Easter message for "prudence and calm" to ease communal tensions between Christians and Muslims in Nazareth and Palestinian-ruled Bethlehem.

Menuhin said Muslims want to build a mosque at the disputed Nazareth site, near the grave of the nephew of Saladin, the Muslim leader who ousted the Crusaders from the Holy Land in the 12th century. They have been manning a protest tent there.

The Nazareth municipality wants to build a public square at the site for pilgrims to mark the start of Christianity's third millennium.

Speaking at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem's walled Old City, Sabbah called on "the silent majority" to come out to solve "problems that are caused by fear."

The church is the traditional burial place of Jesus.

"We refuse all kinds of aggression directed against our people, be it disregard of our dignity or negligence of our existence as Christians who are firm in our duties towards our people... and brother Muslims, Jews and Christians," he said.

Egypt moves toward cancelling loophole for rapists in legislation

CAIRO (AFP) — Egypt has taken a first step toward removing a law that exempts a rapist from punishment if he marries his victim, a cabinet spokesman said Sunday.

The Egyptian cabinet voted to adopt a bill cancelling penal code section 291, which allows a rapist to escape the consequences of his act by marrying his victim, following an outcry by women's groups in December.

President Hosni Mubarak has been championing the change, which must be

approved by parliament in order to take effect.

The bill received cabinet backing Saturday, one day before a court in northern Egypt sentenced an unemployed 27-year-old man to death Sunday for kidnapping and raping a three-year-old girl.

Justice Minister Farouk Seif Al Nasr was quoted by the government newspaper Al Ahram Sunday as saying that "the general feeling is that this section encourages rapists and is bad for women's security."

In December, prosecutors

freed three rape suspects after one of them offered to marry the victim and she accepted.

Women's groups were outraged and demanded the annulment of section 291.

Rape victims tend to accept offers of marriage from their attackers to minimise the disgrace to their family.

Section 291 "was adopted under Britain's occupation of Egypt," Egypt's top Muslim official, Mufti Nasr Farid Wassef, said in January. He added that the law was in "urgent" need of change.

'Iraqi wounded in U.S., U.K. air attack'

BAGHDAD (AFP) — An Iraqi was wounded in U.S. and British air raids Sunday on military and civilian sites in southern Iraq, a military spokesman in Baghdad said.

Iraqi aircraft "forced" the attacking planes "to flee" toward their bases in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, the Iraqi anti-aircraft defense spokesman said.

U.S. and British warplanes "bombed civilian installations" and anti-aircraft defense positions in southern Iraq, "wounding a citizen," he said, quoted by the official INA news agency.

He did not say whether the wounded person was a soldier or a civilian.

The raids were conducted by U.S. F-14, F-15, F-16 and F-18 aircraft and British Tornados, over the southern provinces of Basra and Nassiriya.

They were arrayed in 13 formations and carried out 26 sorties, starting at 1:35 p.m. (0935 GMT). Twenty-two sorties were launched from Saudi Arabia and the rest from Kuwait, the spokesman said.

"Our interceptors confronted them, forcing them to flee at

3:53 p.m. [1153 GMT] toward the bases they took off from in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait."

He called the Kuwaiti and Saudi leaders who allowed the allied aircraft to use their territory "traitors who are participating in the U.S. and British plot against Iraq."

Skirmishes between allied aircraft and Iraq resumed Friday after a two-week lull.

Iraq said Friday that a crude oil facility along a southern pipeline had been destroyed in an attack by allied planes.

But oil exports were continu-

ing under emergency arrangements, the oil ministry said. U.S. and British aircraft regularly patrol no-fly zones over northern and southern Iraq.

The southern zone was established in August 1992 in an attempt to prevent attacks on the Shiite population, while a northern zone was set up in April 1991 to protect the Kurdish population.

Iraq does not recognise the legitimacy of the no-fly zones, which were not established by specific U.N. resolutions, and has vowed to oppose them.

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"I'm very afraid that in our struggle for the sanctity of the body of a deceased person, we're deciding against the sanctity of life," he told army radio.

Buzaglio, who served in the army's reserve medical corps for 13 years, said such defences infuriated him.

"You don't need to practice on a body to learn resuscitation," he said.

Jewish law prohibits autopsies under almost all circumstances, and many Israelis oppose the technique.

Families bring accusations of unethical autopsies, cover-up against Israeli army

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AP) — The father of fallen soldier said on Sunday that army doctors used his son's body to practice medical techniques and then tried to cover it up.

The accusations have sparked a media debate between parents concerned about the sanctity of their sons' bodies and army doctors who say the practice is necessary to teach live-saving techniques.

Haim Buzaglio, who is also a doctor, said the army went ahead with training in resuscitation techniques on his son's body after it failed to get the

family's permission to do so.

Zeev, 19, died in a training accident.

Buzaglio first noticed a scar on his son's neck at Zeev's funeral two years ago, but said he thought it was from attempts to resuscitate him by cutting an incision in his throat to allow air to enter his lungs.

A military report released four months ago revealed that no such procedure was performed and Buzaglio asked a military tribunal to investigate.

Police spokeswoman Linda Menuhin said police were also investigating Buzaglio's charges.

Buzaglio said the operation

was performed at a pathological institute just hours after he and his wife signed a form denying the army permission to operate on the body.

The army spokesman said in a statement that it was investigating the issue, but that it does not perform operations without consent from the deceased's families.

Nonetheless, the army defended the practice.

"Through the process of operating on cadavers, doctors succeeded in carrying out operations that saved lives," the army said.

Army Surgeon General Arieh Eldad said that the need

to save lives outweighed religious considerations.

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Sweden tackles issue of nuclear waste burial

By Abigail Schmeitz
Reuters

STOCKHOLM — Writing a letter to our descendants 25,000 years in the future may seem more like a science fiction plot than a problem to ponder today. But for Sweden Mikael Jensen, the puzzle is not so far off.

Sweden, with its high environmental standards, is closer than any other country, with the possible exception of Finland, to deciding a long-term solution for dealing with nuclear waste.

Scientists in Sweden are designing a deep underground vault where the waste can cool off. But spent fuel rods can take up to 100,000 years until they are at levels which occur in nature.

That's why Jensen needs to think about a "Do Not Disturb" warning readable thousands of years from now to prevent anyone from entering the poisonous cavern.

A sign has to be ominous enough to scare people away and prevent anyone from thinking it hides a valuable treasure.

Language may be completely changed or orderly society may cease to exist, wiped out by war, disease or a meteorite.

"People speculate that if society is at a high level, they will understand everything. If society is at a low level, they will not drill — nothing will happen," Jensen.

a physicist at Sweden's Radiation Protection Authority SSI, told Reuters.

"But if something happens, and we still have the equipment, but not the knowledge — that's when it gets dangerous."

Jensen favours both marking the site with a sign and maintaining archives to explain further to scientists exactly what the location, contents and design of the repository are.

The aim would also be to help scientists — who may have a better method of dealing with nuclear waste — find the site.

Some of Jensen's studies included research into the world's oldest archives — at the Vatican — where documents have been meticulously preserved for more than 800 years.

"An argument against the archive is that we're expecting another Ice Age in Sweden within 10,000 years to cover us in three kilometres of ice for tens of thousands of years," Jensen said.

A surface marker could show different degrees of complexity, starting from a primitive danger sign and advancing to the full scientific formulas describing what is there.

It could be plastic chips at different levels underground to ward off drillers or a dangerous looking landscape of spikes. Scientists will narrow down the choice to one site in Sweden, where detailed

research will start, in about 10 years.

Until then the waste is in medium-term storage where it is safe for at least 70 years, about 15 of which have passed, unless the facility is upgraded.

The first step in a lengthy process of building a repository is finding a site. In a referendum on one proposal, residents of the northern city of Mala decided by a narrow margin not to accept nuclear waste in their backyard.

Part of the reason for the "no" vote was campaigning by the environmental group Greenpeace which says scientists cannot prove a repository is safe and waste should be kept on the earth's surface to be monitored until a solution can be found.

"Today there is no way to deal with waste safely. But in the future there might be. We cannot apply a wrong solution just because we don't have one," Greenpeace Sweden spokesman Dima Litvinov told Reuters.

If no site is accepted or if no municipality agrees to host the repository, the existing intermediate storage facility will probably keep the fuel for longer.

The new repository would be about 500 metres deep and the waste would be protected in steel, covered with copper and packed in clay. These canisters would be laid vertically into rock and then the repository sealed.

Besides human intrusion, the ground-

water is the only way that contamination can reach the surface," said Olle Zellman, head of a lab researching the repository.

Scientists said the design in the copper canister, chosen because it corrodes slowly, will keep the canister intact for at least a million years, much longer than the 100,000 years during which contamination from the canisters could be dangerous to humans.

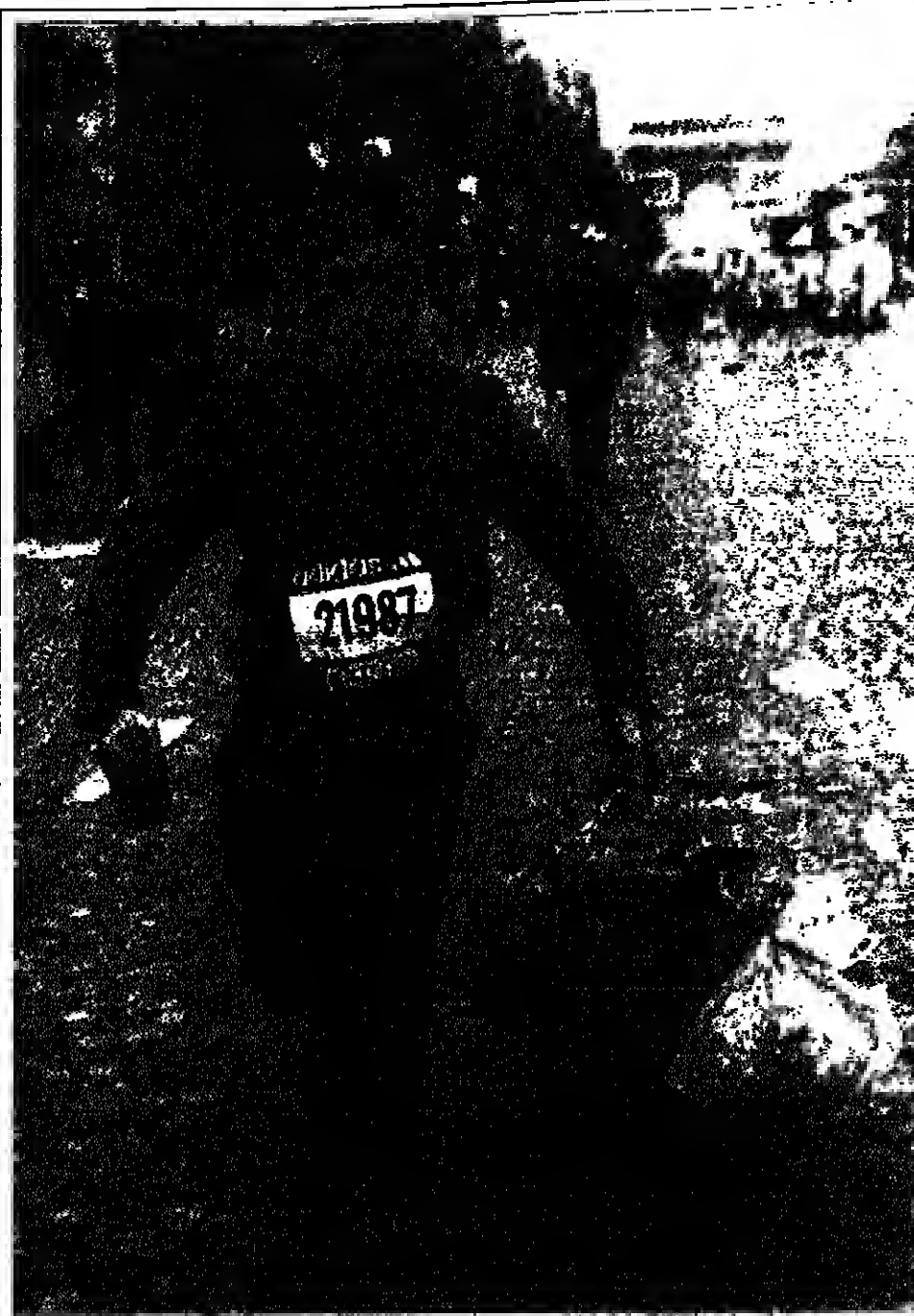
Ground-water would slowly fill the repository, but because there is no free oxygen in the bedrock at this depth, the copper would not corrode. If some radioactivity did escape, the bedrock would act as a filter.

After the repository is sealed, no surveillance or maintenance is needed, although local residents may demand it.

In 1980, with the U.S. Three Mile Island nuclear accident fresh in mind, Swedes voted to close their plants.

A deadline of 2010 was set, although critics say the plan is impractical and costly. But this decision will not solve the problem of what to do with the waste that has accumulated since the reactors were switched on in 1972.

The issue is stalled in Swedish courts as the operators of the nuclear power plants demand compensation from the government for lost profits, but a decision is expected in the coming weeks.



MARATHON IN PARIS: A homeless man participates in the 23rd Paris Marathon on Sunday. Julius Ruto of Kenya won the event in 2 hours, 8min 10 seconds (AFP photo)



Feeding displays to end for fat sharks

SYDNEY (AFP) — Tourists visiting Oceanworld in Sydney may no longer be able to watch sharks being fed by scuba divers after they were judged to be growing too fat. One of the 10 divers who recently resigned from Manly Oceanworld said Sunday that the new owners of the attraction, Sydney Aquarium, decided the twice daily feeding displays had no part in a serious aquarium. "They're wrong because they attracted a lot of people and the shows were the best way to educate people about sharks," former diving manager Anthony Ruddy said. The diver admitted some of the sharks were obese. "They are all bigger than they would be in the real world, but they are still healthy," he said. After each show divers recorded the amount eaten by the sharks and if a shark ate too much it would be starved for up to two days. "It's important to remember that if they get hungry in the tank they will start eating other fish," Ruddy said.

Girl Scout cookie sales at U.S. missions banned

WASHINGTON (AFP) — In a move that may be blasted as half-hearted, the State Department has banned sales of Girl Scout cookies at U.S. embassies worldwide, a weekly magazine reported Sunday. "It was something about rules against fund-raising on government property," U.S. News and World Report quotes a U.S. official as saying to explain the prohibition on sales of Thin Mints, Do-si-dos, Samoas and Trefoils.

Don't say it with flowers

DHAKA (R) — Anyone wanting to say it with flowers to Bangladesh's opposition leader Begum Khaleda Zia will have to think again. Her party has banned floral bouquets for security reasons, her party said on Sunday. "The decision has been taken in the wake of sharply deteriorating law and order in the country," said Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, secretary general of Khaleda's Bangladesh Nationalist Party. "This is a step to forestall any attempt on the life of our leader," he said, adding that bouquets can contain explosives. "Anyone wanting to offer respect to her with flowers will henceforth be allowed to hand a few flower sticks only, not a bouquet," Bhuiyan told Reuters.

Newts in space

MOSCOW (AFP) — Live newts were among supplies delivered Sunday to Russian and French astronauts aboard the orbiting space station Mir. Interfax agency said. Russians Viktor Afanasyev and Sergei Avdeyev and Frenchman Jean-Pierre Haignere will use the newts for experiments, it reported from mission control in Baikonur in Kazakhstan. The crew will spend the next few days unloading fuel, oxygen, scientific material and food from the Progress M-41 cargo space vessel which docked at 12:46 GMT Sunday. Haignere and Afanasyev have been aboard the craft for 44 days while Avdeyev has already spent 234 days in space.

Not grounded and not amused

ATHENS (R) — Callers to a special info-line for Greek carrier Olympic Airways last week were told that the airline was not flying. The state-owned carrier — which has had its problems with delays and strikes — was not amused. The company said in a statement it would file suit for damages against anyone found to have been responsible for the incorrect message and demanded that OTE, the Greek state-owned telephone company, conduct an inquiry.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Israeli fire wounds 9 Lebanese civilians

NABATTYEH (R) — Five children and four civilian adults were wounded in two separate shelling incidents around Israel's south Lebanon occupation zone on Sunday, security sources said. One source said one of the victims was a two-year-old, who was seriously injured with three other children and four adults when a shell landed in the courtyard of a house in Habboush village, just north of the zone. Another source said a 12-year-old was wounded by shelling on Arabsalim village in the same area. The incidents raised to 26 the number of civilians wounded in attacks on Lebanon by Israel or its local militia proxy since the start of 1999. One person has been killed during the period. Earlier on Sunday, security sources said Israeli warplanes attacked suspected guerrilla positions in two different parts of south Lebanon.

Fateh killing case reopened after demo

RAMALLAH (AFP) — The Palestinian National Authority (PNA) announced Sunday it would reopen the trial of two military intelligence agents accused of killing a Fateh activist, who were acquitted by a military court the previous day. The turnaround came after about 1,000 supporters of Palestinian President Yasser Arafat's mainstream Fateh movement protested here Sunday against the acquittal of the two men after a hearing held entirely behind closed doors. Fateh activists in Ramallah took to the streets on Sunday, burning tyres and closing shops in the city centre to protest against the ruling, witnesses said. The security services in the West Bank decided to send the case back to the military attorney-general "in order to complete his inquiry," the official Voice of Palestine radio said following the demonstrations.

'Most Israelis support Palestinian state'

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (R) — A majority of Israelis believed the Palestinians' drive for an independent state is not only unstoppable but a just demand, according to an opinion poll published on Sunday. The "peace index" poll, conducted by Tel Aviv University's Tami Steinmetz Centre, found 69 per cent of Israeli Jews believed an independent Palestinian state was inevitable and 55 per cent believed the Palestinians deserve it. "There is a gradual erosion in Israeli fears of the Palestinian enemy," said poll director Professor Ephraim Ya'ar. Ya'ar said the poll, carried out in March, was the first to show a majority of Israelis believed Palestinians had the right to demand a state, as opposed to merely resigning themselves to a state arising from Middle East peace talks. But the poll found a strong majority opposed compromising Israeli rule over Arab east Jerusalem, which Palestinians want as the capital of a future state. Ya'ar said the proportion of Israelis who thought Palestinians would destroy the Jewish state if they could fell below 50 per cent for the first time in four years of polling.

Four SLA members desert

BEIRUT (AFP) — Four deserters from the Israeli-occupied South Lebanon Army (SLA) sneaked out of the Israeli-occupied zone of southern Lebanon Sunday and handed themselves over to the Lebanese army, security sources said. The four, three Druze and one Christian, all came from the largely Druze village of Shebaa. They were accompanied by their wives and children, making a total of 12 people. They said they had walked for 12 kilometres through hills and valleys before they reached a Lebanese army post outside the zone. They bring to six the number of SLA deserters in the past month, all of them from the Druze-dominated eastern sector.

Algerian opposition leader in hospital

ALGIERS (R) — Algeria's main secular opposition leader and presidential contender, Hocine Ait Ahmed, is in hospital with a heart condition, a hospital official said on Sunday. "Ait Ahmed has been in Chevalley Hospital [in Algiers] since Saturday after he suffered a heart attack. He is still under intensive care," said the official, who asked not to be named. Ait Ahmed's spokesman Djamel Zenati played down the seriousness of his illness, describing it as a "slight heart discomfort." Zenati said the 73-year-old politician expected to recover within two or three days to resume his campaign for the April 15 presidential poll. Ait Ahmed, leader of the main secular opposition Socialist Forces Front (FFS), is one of seven hopefuls running to succeed President Liamine Zeroul.